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Includes 8-Page Special Issue on Congratulatory Messages to the President-Elect

24 PAGES, PRICE 200 RIALS

VOL. XIX; 45; WEDNESDAY MAY 28, 1997; KHORDAD 7, 1376; MOHARRAM 21, 1418

Yeltsin Stuns NATO With Nuclear Bombshell

PARIS — President Boris Yeltsin on Tuesday stunned NATO leaders with an announcement that Russia would unilaterally disarm nuclear warheads it currently has targetted on the West.

His dramatic gesture came in an impromptu intervention at the signing ceremony of an accord that clears the way for NATO to start expanding into Eastern Europe this summer.

(Contd on Pg. 14)

Russia Ready to Cooperate With Khatami's Government

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Russian Foreign Ministry in a statement released on Tuesday expressed Moscow's readiness to fully cooperate with the government of the president-elect Hojjatoleslam Mohammad Khatami.

The statement, read by the Foreign Ministry Spokesman Gennady Tarasov, stressed that Russia has been always after promotion of all-out relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran, particularly in settling regional disputes.

(Contd on Pg. 14)

Iranian Ambassador Sums Up President's Visit to Turkmenistan

FOCUS

ASHKHABAD — Iranian Ambassador to Turkmenistan, Seyed Mahdi Mir Abutalebi, talking with the *Tehran Times*, summed up President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani's visit to that Central Asian state as "historic" and "promising."

He expressed confidence that the decisions made by President Rafsanjani and his Turkmen counterpart, Saparmurat Niyazov, in a friendly atmosphere will materialize soon.

Looking exhausted but optimistic about the fruits of the president's visit to Chardjou, Marv and Ashkhabad, Mir Abutalebi said President Rafsanjani's trip was a response to an invitation by his Turkmen counterpart to survey the avenues for economic, trade, technical and political cooperation between the two countries. (Contd on Pg. 15)

I Try to Live Up to My Programs Through Legal Channels and Cooperation of Other Organs

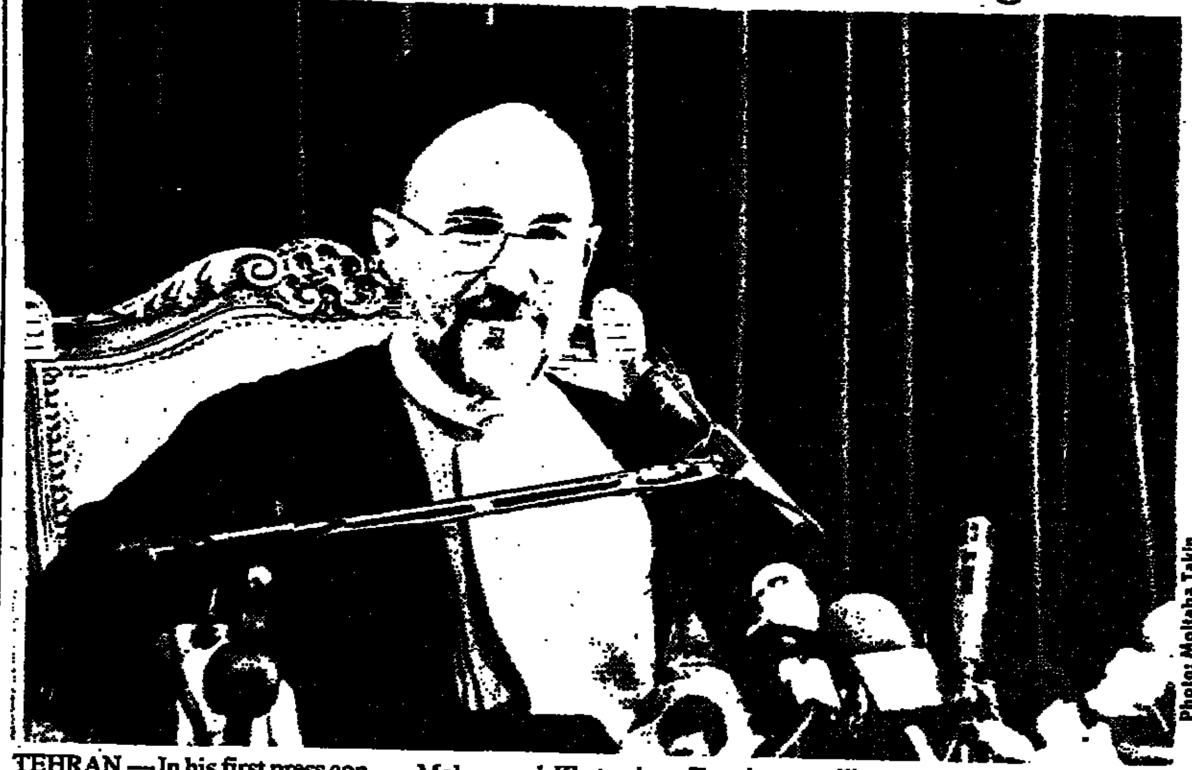


Photo: Mojtaba Takin

TEHRAN — In his first press conference after the election, president-elect Hojjatoleslam Seyed Mohammad Khatami on Tuesday said that he is loyal to the plans outlined in his campaign and he will try to live up to his plans through legal channels and coop- (Contd on Pg. 14)

Rafsanjani's Role in Iran's Future Politics

FOCUS

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — President-elect Hojjatoleslam Seyed Mohammad Khatami stressed at the press conference held here yesterday that his cabinet would make the most of the views, guidelines and experience of the standard-bearer for Iran's construction and veteran statesman Hojjatoleslam Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani.

President Rafsanjani was among the first followers of the late Leader of the Islamic Revolution Imam Khomeini when the patriarch launched his Islamic revolutionary movement against the despotic rule of the Pahlavi regime in 1963.

Ever since the victory of the Islamic Revolution in 1979, Rafsanjani has been holding key government offices and has gained precious experience in different social, economic and political are- (Contd on Pg. 14)

TEHRAN TIMES

TEHRAN TIMES NEWS SERVICE
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Fax No. 8808214
ISSN 1017-9410
Address: No. 32, Koucheh Bimeh
Nejatollahi Ave. [former Villa]
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Printed at Kayhan

In the Name of God

Alif Lam Ra. These are the verses of the wise Book

(HOLY QORAN) (10:1)

OPINION

Foreign Powers Must Stop Meddling in Afghanistan

The unfolding of events in Afghanistan indicates that within a short time the Taleban will be controlling the whole of the war ravaged country. The Taleban victory has been facilitated by the help of Pakistan's military assistance, Saudi Arabia's money and the United States' political support.

The main force behind the Taleban victory is foreign meddling in Afghanistan's internal affairs. The Taleban will have to repay their patrons for the support lent them for being crowned in Kabul.

Foreign supporters of Taleban pursue their own objectives in Afghanistan—both economic and strategic.

The U.S. and Pakistan are attempting to plant a stooge government in Kabul in order to convert Afghanistan into a crossroads for gas and oil pipelines from Central Asia to the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean.

The U.S. is also planning to plant another stooge in order to follow its strategic objectives in the region. According to Afghan Premier Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, after the Taleban capture all of Afghanistan, the U.S. will treat them as a spent force, and will dislodge them from power to install its own men.

If the Taleban are after the national interests of Afghanistan, we advise them to refrain from obedience to foreign forces, to rely on the Afghan people, and to prepare the way for national reconciliation and the formation of a consensus government. If the Taleban fail to do so, the United States will force them to relinquish power.

Iran Attends Islamic States Meeting on Youth

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — An Iranian delegation attended a two-day meeting of the Islamic states on sports and the youth affairs in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on Monday, an IRNA report from Abu Dhabi said.

The meeting is expected to draft the agenda for the upcoming ministerial meeting of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) in Riyadh this year on the sports and the youth affairs.

Iranian Permanent Ambassador to the OIC Sabah Zanganeh said Iran has offered proposals on promoting sports and championship to the current meeting which is expected to be placed on the agenda of the ministerial meet.

Referring to the international meeting on the youth due to be held by the United Nations next year, he proposed in the meeting that the Islamic states cooperate to reach common views so that the Islamic principles would be included in the International Declaration of the Youth.

The proposal achieved the meeting's endorsement and was agreed to be put on the agenda of the next meeting of the ministers of sports and the youth affairs of Islamic countries.

People More Deserving of Public Services

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN—Addressing government employees responsible for last year's population and housing census, President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani emphasized the importance of their responsibilities and the successful implementation of the 1996 census of Iran's population and housing (a census of the number of houses owned and the number rented).

"The importance of accurate figures and statistics in the government's short- and long-term planning cannot be ignored," the president exhorted.

"The IRIB [Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting], in concert with you, should provide even more information to the public from the analyzed data," President Rafsanjani told the gathering of statisticians and census-takers.

He told them that all statistics point to a society well able to comprehensively manage the affairs of the state; this shows the comprehensive nature of Islamic laws in running modern societies.

President Rafsanjani said the education has been upgraded, job opportunities increased, industry developed and unemployment reduced despite population growth.

Living standard has improved in terms of electricity, water supply, telecommunication facilities and better roads for transportation, he added.

The president called on the officials to release the figures of the public census indicating the progress in reconstruction of the Islamic Republic of Iran which is useful for the developing nations to model on it in development of their countries.

On shortage of housing, president said the census showed that only 15 percent of the population are tenants so the housing problem can be solved with an emergency program.

In the meantime, President Rafsanjani awarded head of the Statistics Center of Iran Abbas Ali Zali and five other officials in

(Contd on Pg. 14)

More Congratulation Messages on Khatami's Victory

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — President-elect Hojjatoleslam Mohammad Khatami received more messages of congratulations on Tuesday on his election as the next president of Iran in May 23 polls.

Khatami gained a landslide victory in the seventh presidential elections by winning about 70 percent of the ballots cast. He will be inaugurated as Iran's fifth president in 67 days.

President Imomali Rakhmanov of Tajikistan sent a message of congratulations to Hojjatoleslam Khatami on Tuesday.

In his message aired by Tajik radio and television, Rakhmanov expressed hope that Khatami's efforts will promote security, tranquility and development both in Iran and the region.

The Tajik president also called for promotion of Tehran-Dushanbe ties to the interest of both countries as well as consolidation of bilateral cooperation during Khatami's term of office.

The South Korean President Kim Young-Sam, in a message on Tuesday, felicitated Hojjatoleslam Khatami on his election to the post.

He expressed hope that wise management of the president-elect would guarantee the continuation of eye-catching development in Iran as well as the prosperity of Iranian nation.

President Kim also called for further consolidation of Tehran-Seoul relations.

The President of Yemen Ali Abdullah Saleh in another congratulatory message to president-elect Khatami, called for promotion of Tehran-San'a relations.

Bangladeshi President Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, in two separate messages addressed to Hojjatoleslam Khatami, conveyed their warm congratulations on his victory in presidential elections.

The Bangladeshi president and premier also expressed confidence that during the upcoming tenure of the presidency of Hojjatoleslam Khatami, the Islamic Republic of Iran will achieve further economic development and the fraternal relations existing between Bangladesh and the Islamic Republic of Iran will be further strengthened and consolidated.

The Political Office of the Islamic Da'wa Party of Iraq cabled a message of congratulations to president-elect Khatami on Tuesday.

In its cable, the party wished success for all Muslim nations.

Turkish President Suleyman Demirel on Monday sent a message to Hojjatoleslam Khatami felicitating his election as president of Iran.

Demirel also wished him success in his office.

An Iranian Embassy source told IRNA that the Greek President Kostis Stephanopoulos sent a message of congratulations, on Monday, to the new President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Hojjatoleslam Khatami.

President Omar al-Bashir of Sudan has cabled a message to Iran's president-elect to congratulate him on his victory in Friday's presidential elections.

(Contd on Pg. 14)

Judiciary Chief Felicitates Khatami

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Head of the Judiciary Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi, in a message cabled to president-elect Hojjatoleslam Mohammad Khatami on Monday, felicitated him on his election as the fifth president of Iran.

According to IRNA, the head of the judicairy said in his message that the overwhelming majority vote for him by the people had been in fact the people's vote for Islam and for the lofty aspirations of the Founder of the Islamic Republic, the late Imam Khomeini.

The Spiritual leader of Iranian Jews, Rabbi Yousef Kohan Hamedani on Tuesday congratulated Hojjatoleslam Khatami on his election as the new president.

In his message to the president-elect, the Rabbi said that the Jewish community, as in the past, will continue to use all facilities at its disposal to enhance the prestige and honor of the beloved motherland under the Islamic Republic system.

Head of the Islamic Center in Britain Hojjatoleslam Araki in a felicitation message cabled on Tuesday, called the landslide victory of Hojjatoleslam Khatami a great historic event, which can be the source of blessings for Islam and the Muslim revolutionary nation of Iran.

Narcotics Confiscated in Sistan-Baluchestan

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Some 685 kg of various kinds of narcotic drugs have been seized from drug traffickers in the southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan in the past three days, it was announced in Zahedan on Tuesday.

According to IRNA, the narcotic drugs, confiscated by the Law Enforcement Forces of Zahedan and Mirjaveh, included 310 kg morphine, 211 kg opium, and 164 kg heroin.

The Law Enforcement Forces on Tehran announced on Sunday that some 12,809 kgs of narcotics were confiscated last month.

They added that the drug haul comprises 11,236 kgs of opium, 483 kgs of hashish, 516 kgs of morphine and 560 kgs of heroin.

RUSSIAN OFFICIAL:

Iran's Election as Attractive as Its Revolution

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Duma's Representative and leader of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia Vladimir Zhirinovsky said on Tuesday that the recent persidential election in Iran was as attractive as the Islamic Revolution in 1979.

Speaking to IRNA in Moscow, he said that the victory of Hojjatoleslam Mohammad Khatami was in fact nothing but the continuation of the Islamic Revolution, resulting in disappointment of the enemies and peace of mind and trust of friends.

Hojjatoleslam Khatami as a man of culture enjoys the support of the majority of the Iranian people, Zhirinovsky added.

He also underlined the necessity of further expanding bilateral cooperation between the two countries.

Hojjatoleslam Khatami who won the presidential election on May 23 is to be sworn in as the fifth president of Iran on August 3.

Reports on Rabbani's Asylum in Iran Denied

Tehran Times Service

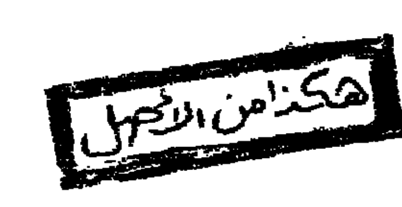
TEHRAN — The Afghan Charge d'Affaires to China, Abdulbasir Hotak, in Beijing Tuesday denied baseless allegations that the Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani has sought asylum in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Speaking to IRNA correspondent, he added that the claim is made by a number of Pakistani agents.

He stressed that the agents spread such rumors in order to shatter the morale of the resistance of the Afghan nation in confrontation with the Taleban group. The Western media also try to exacerbate the issue, Hotak added.

Underlining the friendly ties existing between Tehran and Kabul, he added that President Rabbani is neither in Iran nor is willing to seek asylum in the Islamic Republic.

Rabbani is leading the resistance movement against the Taleban group in Badakhshan region, in Afghanistan, he concluded.



Caspian Watch

By F.T. Khoie

Part 4

"Where would humankind be without a healthy environment? Uncontrolled exploitation of our natural resources by foreigners whom are the least concerned about our state of health does more than creating greater wealth for the already wealthy. It destorys the climate for our national growth which leads to higher dependency on the same foreigners in all facets of life."

West's Hunger for Power & Control

The Western states have some shared goals in the Caspian region, and despite their ferocious appetite for wealth, power and control and a greedy sense of competition over the world's natural resources, they are trying to co-ordinate their policies much more closely. There are also complex trade-offs involved. Rival pipeline consortium projects have different routes. The likeliest and most economical and intelligent options lie south, across Iran through the Persian Gulf ports of Bandar Abbas and Chah Bahar.

The other options include across the Caucasus and Russia, and possibly Turkey as well, or southwards across Afghanistan and Pakistan. A combination of routs for new pipelines is also possible only at huge costs which is even beyond the oil companies' capacity.

For the land-locked Central Asian states, the choice of a land bridge southwards to a seaport for exporting oil to world markets is between Iran's Persian Gulf, or Afghanistan and Pakistan (via a port on the Arabian Sea); however the latter is unrealistic and unlikely due to continued war and instability in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

As stated above, Iran has already completed a railay linking its own rail system to Turkmenistan (and other republics), and is negotiating with all parties concerned to provide the main route for Caspian gas and oil pipelines, as well as the existing bulk trade for Central Asia from the Persian Gulf.

Iran has already begun helping Kazakhstan trading its oil on the basis of swap deal by which it enables Kazakhstan to sell to world markets without the costs of pumping oil through Russia, which still controls the pipeline routes out of the Central Asian countries. Kazakhstan has begun the program to deliver between 2 million and 6 million tones of oil over a 5 years period, to Iranian northern ports of Caspian Sea for which Iran shall credit Kazakhstan with an equivalent amount of oil (minus the agreed cost of transit) ready for export from one of the Iranian ports in the Persian Gulf.

Another recent agreement reached between Iran, Turkey and Turkmenistan which was signed on 28 December 1996 in Tehran, through which it is agreed to transfer Iran's and Turkmenistan's gas to Turkey and from there to Europe. According to this agreement Iran will purchase 2 billion to 8 billion cubic meters of gas from Turkmenistan and sell it to Turkey via the pipelines currently under construction. Turkey will purchase some 4 billion cubic meters of natural gas from Iran annually starting 1988, and annual purchase will increase to 8 billion cubic meters by the year 2000.

Two pipelines are currently under construction and both are due for completion in 1998: one to transfer Turkmen gas to Iran, the other connecting the Iranian city of Tabriz to the Turkish border. The three countries party to the agreement are targeting the transfer of some 20 billion to 25 billion cubic meters of Iran's and Turkmenistan's natural gas to Turkey and Europe by end of the next decade.

However, the U.S. government, wishing to dominate Iran, is trying (unsuccessfully) to block this route, as part of its policy to isolate and contain Iran. U.S. observers are under the illusion that neither Iran nor any of the new states of Central Asia have access to the money needed to construct pipelines, and assume that such financing is only possible with the support of the Western oil companies and financial institutions, but Iran has repeatedly proven them wrong.

Bangladesh, India, Pakistan to Hold November Summit on Economic Cooperation

DHAKA — The Bangladesh, India and Pakistan leaders are to meet in Dhaka in November for talks on expanding economic cooperation, a senior government minister was quoted as saying by newspapers Tuesday.

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad said late Monday that Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed had invited her Indian and Pakistani counterparts Inder Kumar Gujral and Nawaz Sharif to a summit.

They have accepted the invitation to come to Dhaka in November, Azad told a Commonwealth Journalists Association meeting.

He added that the summit was aimed at coordinating efforts to boost economic cooperation in line with the rest of the world. *(AFP)*

Hong Kong's Return to China Will Have no Effect on Business

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — China's takeover of Hong Kong from Britain in July 1997 would not affect business, because the Hong Kong administration has been indirectly building relations with the People's Republic of China since 1983, IRNA said.

I think there would be no effect, since business people in Hong Kong are Hong Kong citizens themselves. One proof of this is the fact international business activities are still going on while the hotels are already fully booked, Mandarin Oriental Group (MOG) president Robeth Riley said in Surabaya East Jave on Tuesday.

Riley was addressing a world MOG general managers and marketing managers meeting also attended by the minister of tourism, post and telecommunications.

MOG manages 61 hotels in different parts of the world, one of which in Surabaya and another in Jakarta, and holds annual meetings on hotel activities and budgets.

A simiar statement was also aired by another hotel manager in Hong Kong Liam Lambert. He said the seven packages for July 1997 have all been ordered since 1983.

The historical occasion when Hong Kong reverts to the China will take place in the presence of several heads of state and cabinet ministers, including seven APEC foreign ministers. They will include Margaret Thatcher, who will be staying at a MO hotel in Hong Kong.

Iran's Trade Fair to Open in Armenia

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — The Iranian exclusive trade fair will open in Yerevan, the capital of Armenia on June 5.

Some 28 industrial and manufacturing companies affiliated to the Janbazan va Mostazafan (war veteran disabled and the deprived) Foundation will take part in the 10-day exhibition.

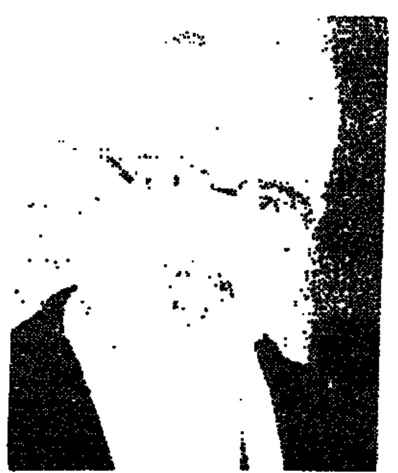
Hassan Soltanpour, the foundation's manager in charge of foreign trade announced that a total area of 1,300 sq meters has been allocated to the Iranian companies.

Referring to the ample grounds of cooperation between Iran and Central Asian countries, Soltanpour called on Iranian manufacturers to increase their activities in this part of the world.

Soltanpour noted that the Armenian government has taken key measures in recent years to facilitate participation of Iranian companies in such exhibitions.

The exhibition is organized by the Iranian Export Promotion Center with the collaboration of Iran-Armenia Joint Chamber of Commerce.

Aqazadeh: Oil Price Hike Indicates Drop in OPEC Production



Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Oil Minister Gholamreza Aqazadeh said here Tuesday that the member countries of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) observe their production quotas.

He further told reporters that the increase in price of each barrel of oil by $2.5 in the international market indicates lower OPEC oil produciton.

Following agreements reached at the Supervising Committee of the OPEC held recently in Isfahan, no quota violations have been reported in the production of the member couptries and the 11 members are observing their quotas.

The meeting which was held simultaneously with the Seminar on Oil and Gas in Middle East in the Third Millenium, seven ministers from the 11 member countries were present.

The participating ministers considered lowering productions as the only way to strengthen the market and therefore, a revision in production quota of the member countries was called for.

Aqazadeh said that the Libyan minister of oil who chaired the OPEC meeting in Isfahan visited the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Algeria later on with positive results in his negotiations to slash the production and put an end to the glut in the market.

He said the oil prices have sustained pressure in the past several months to an extent that the price of the North Sea oil dropped to $17.5 per barrel.

But, the recent decision of the OPEC's Monitoring Committee to cut oil production served to pick up the price to $2.5 per barrel.

Asked about his visits to Seoul and Beijing, Aqazadeh said he signed various agreements on oil, gas and petrochemicals with the South Korean and Chinese officials.

He said, "In light of the high quality and diversity of Iranian petrochemical products on the world market especially on the Far-East market, the South Korean officials signed an agreement to buy $300 million worth of petrochemicals from Iran."

On the agreements with China, Aqazadeh said the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) has held negotiations with Chinese off-shore oil company to develop Iran's Khouf-Salman gas reserves. A Chinese delegation is expected to visit Iran soon to study the project, he concluded.

TEHRAN (May 27): Iranian First Vice-President Hassan Habibi (R) confers with Australian ambassador to Tehran (L).

Iran Welcomes Chinese Participation in Economic, Industrial Projects

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Deputy Minister of Economy and Financial Affairs Mahdi Navvab, on a trip to Beijing said that the Islamic Republic of Iran, welcomes more Chinese participation in implementing economic and industrial projects in the country.

Navvab, attending a symposium of the Iran-China Joint Economic Commission in Shanghai yesterday, said that China can more fully participate in joint projects if Chinese banks provide the required credit for the projects, arrange buy-back plans, or pave the way for Iran to enter joint ventures with Chinese corporations.

He further emphasized that the China can gain more than a foothold in littoral Persian Gulf states as well as the newly independent Central Asian states and the Caucuses.

Navvab underlined joint supervision of the two countries in helping Chinese and Iranian corporations in various economic spheres.

Meanwhile another high ranking Iranian official attending the symposium, Mortazavi, who is in charge of overseas investments of the Finance Ministry reiterated that Iran is one of the best countries in the world to invest in.

He added that Iran has the political stability needed for joint projects and foreign investments, enjoys a very unique geographical location, boasts of almost limitless resources, which all should encourage wise investors to seek opportunities in the Islamic Republic.

Another way to help bring to fruition such projects, "is for Iranian and Chinese engineering concerns to share in projects in a third country".

Iran, Ukrain to Upgrade Ties in Agriculture

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — A visiting Iranian Agriculture Ministry official, Reza Arjomand in a meeting Monday in Kiev with Ukrainian officials reviewed expansion of bilateral agricultural relations.

Arjomand, who is director general of Production Cooperatives of the Agriculture Ministry, is currently in Ukraine to get acquainted with agricultural potentials existing in that country.

During the visit, the draft agreement on bilateral cooperation in the area of agriculture will be drawn up by the Iranian delegation in order to be put forward at the second meeting of Tehran-Kiev joint economic commission.

The two sides will also discuss different areas of agricultural cooperation including, sugar beet, wheat, corn, genetics bank, water and soil biotechnology, agricultural industries and pesticides.

Russian Delegation in Hungary to Discuss Trade, Soviet Debt

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — A Russian delegation, led by Vice-Premier Vladimir Bulgak, is to discuss possibilities for a boost to bilateral trade, and matters concerning repayment by Russia of the remaining part of the former Soviet Union's trade debt to Hungary. The delegation arrived in Budapest on Monday, IRNA reported.

During the forthcoming talks with Hungarian Prime Minister Gyula Horn, Szabolcs Fazakas, minister of industry, trade and tourism, and members of the Hungarian business community, the Russian delegation members are also to touch upon problems of improving the pattern of reciprocal trade.

Bulgak, who arrived in Hungary as a co-chairman of the intergovernmental Russo-Hungarian Commission for Trade and Economic Cooperation, is to attend the opening an international industry-97 fair.

The Russian exhibition at this widely-representative business forum will be represented mainly by civilian goods turned out by major defense-industry enterprises.

584,000 of Goods Exported From Bandar Imam Khomeini

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Some 584,067 tons of goods have been exported from Bandar Imam Khomeini and 2,259,218 tons of commodities imported to the country through the same port this year, it was announced on Tuesday.

The exported items registered a decline of 6 percent while the imported items showed an increase of 101 percent in terms of weight compared to the corresponding period last year.

The items exproted included iron wares, sulphur, plastic materials, liquified gas and tar and the imported items consisted of wheat, barley, corn, soya, rice, meat, vegetable oil, sugar and soda.

Russian Inflation to Drop

MOSCOW — Russia will probably bring inflation down to Western-style single-digit levels next year but the economy is still threatened by a disastrous web of non-payments, top officials said on Tuesday.

Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin told a meeting of senior Finance Ministry officials and parliamentary deputies that the government expected inflation to be 5-8 percent next year.

Finance Minister Anatoly Chubais said Russia would aim for five percent inflation but said the economy was still in danger.

"Non-payments have become disastrous as have multi-month delays in wage payments and delays in social support payments which have lasted not just months, but years," Chubais, who is also first deputy prime minister, told the meeting.

"It would not be an exaggeration for me to say the situation in the economy remains extremely difficult."

The government is targeting annual inflation — measured by the year-on-year increase in prices in December — of 12 percent this year, down from 21.8 percent in 1996. In 1992 when prices were freed as reforms started, inflation was some 2,500 percent.

The economy itself is still stagnant after seven years of contraction and Chubais repeated recent forecasts that gross domestic product (GDP) would grow two percent in 1998. Earlier this year officials had said 1997 growth would be two percent.

(Reuter)

SAARC Meet to Chart Course for Free Trade Zone Next Month

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — The inter-governmental expert group of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) will be holding a meet by the middle of June in Bhutan to suggest steps to be taken for the South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) aimed at liberalizing trade among the member countries, IRNA reported.

According to sources in the Indian Ministry of Commerce, the expert group will also discuss the steps to be taken for the next round of South Asian Preferential Trade Arrangement (SAPTA) concessions in July in Kathmandu, Nepal.

The SAARC summit adopted earlier this month to convert SAPTA into SAFTA by the year 2000 so that the Indian sub-continent region could emerge as an important trading bloc by the turn of the century.

The issue of setting up a South Asian economic union within a period of 22-25 years will also figure during the Bhutan meet.

Trade among SAARC countries, as a percentage of world trade, went up from 3.4 percent in 1991-92 to 5.36 percent in 1995-96.

Poland Welcomes Malaysian Investors

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Malaysian investors have been invited to initiate joint ventures with their counterparts in Poland which offered vast investment opportunities following the republic's switch to the market economy, IRNA reported.

Malaysia's Ambassador to Poland Muhammad Noh said though bilateral trade between Kuala Lumpur and Warsaw was negligible in the past, fresh joint ventures by the private sector could change the scenario.

FOREIGN EXCHANGE RATES

The following table shows the foreign exchange rates in rials as released by the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran on Tuesday, May 27, 1997.

COUNTRY	UNIT	Floating Rates BUY	Floating Rates SELL	Export Rates BUY	Export Rates SELL
Australia	dollar	1,349	1,349	2,303	2,315
Austria	schilling	147	148	252	253
Belgium	(100) francs	5,004	5,032	8,590	8,633
Canada	dollar	1,271	1,278	2,182	2,193
Denmark	krone	271	273	466	468
France	franc	306	308	526	528
Germany	mark	1,033	1,039	1,773	1,782
Holland	guilder	918	923	1,575	1,583
Italy	(100) liras	105	106	180	181
Japan	(100) yen	1,515	1,524	2,601	2,614
Sweden	krune	230	232	395	397
UAE	dirham	476	479	818	820
UK	pound	2,851	2,867	4,894	4,919
U.S.	dollar	1,750	1,755	3,000	3,015





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Steffi Graf Wins Opening Match in Uneven Performance

PARIS — A rusty-looking Steffi Graf, the defending women's champion, moved into the second round of the French Open Tuesday by beating Paola Suarez 6-1, 6-4 in 54 minutes.

Graf, a five-time winner on the red clay of Roland Garros, struggled to close out the match against the Argentine, ranked No. 81 in the world.

Seeded No. 2 this year behind Martina Hingis, Graf appeared far from her peak form. Although she wore a small bandage on her left knee, she showed few visible effects of the surgery she had earlier this year.

This is only Graf's third tournament since returning to action two weeks ago after a three-month layoff.

"I felt a lot better than last week, I served much stronger," Graf said.

The German breezed through the first set in 22 minutes and led 5-1 in the second. But she then lapsed into a slew of unforced errors and lost three straight games before finally serving out the match.

"The mistakes came late in the second set, maybe I lost my concentration a little. I rushed my shots," Graf said.

During her absence, Graf lost the No. 1 ranking to Hingis, a 16-year-old sensation who is unbeaten in six tournaments this year, including the Australian Open.

Hingis was in action later Tuesday against Henrieta Nagyova.

Brenda Schulz-McCarthy, seeded No. 14, advanced by beating Lenka Cenkova 6-3, 7-5.

Carlos Moya, the ninth-seeded Australian Open runner-up, completed a tough five-set victory over qualifier Alberto Martin, a fellow Spaniard, 6-3, 6-7 (7-3), 5-7, 6-3, 6-3. the match had been suspended because of darkness after four sets Monday.

Second-seeded Michael Chang, the 1989 champion, met Rodolphe Gilbert, fourth-seeded Goran Ivanisevic played Magnus Gustafsson, and No. 7 Marcelo Rios took on Wayne Black.

After struggling on clay so far this season, top-seeded Pete Sampras and two past champions. Thomas Muster of Austria and Yevgeny Kafelnikov of Russia, all won their first-round matches Monday.

While Sampras and Kafelnikov, the defending champion, advanced in straight sets, Muster, the 1995 winner, had to battle through five sets.

Sampras, ranked No. 1 in the world and chasing the only Grand Slam tournament title to elude him, won 6-3, 7-5, 6-1 over France's Fabrice Santoro, who had beaten him twice on clay.

Kafelnikov, seeded third, cruised past Czech Martin Damm 6-2, 6-4, 6-4. It was his first win at a Grand Slam tournament since winning the French last year. (AP)

Ronaldo Close to New Barcelona Deal

BARCELONA, Spain — Brazilian star Ronaldo looked certain of staying with Spanish side Barcelona on Tuesday as talks between the club and player's agents continued.

"It's 90 percent cetrain he will be staying," said Barcelona President Jose Luis Nunez who has agreed to raise the 20-year-old's salary after tax from 1.7 million dollars to 3.2 million dollars a year.

Barcelona may have to call on backing from a sportswear firm to pay the player's wages.

Last week Italian side Inter Milan were reported to be ready to make a 75-million-dollar bid for Ronald who has scored a record 34 league goals in his first season for Barcelona. (AFP)



VALENCIA, Spain (May 26): Betis's Alfonso (L) is challenged by Engonga (R) of Valencia during a Spanish first division match. The match ended in a 1-1 draw.

(AFP PHOTO)

Jordan Rally Not Enough to Beat the Heat

MIAMI, Florida — The Miami Heat lived up to Alonzo Mourning's victory guarantee.

Tim Hardaway scored 25 points and Mourning added 18 points and 14 rebounds as Miami survived a furious Chicago rally for an 87-80 victory here Monday to stay alive in the National Basketball Association Playoffs.

After the Bulls won game three here Saturday, Mourning vowed the Heat would avert being swept out of the Playoffs.

"Yeah I did," he said. "Everyone counted us out and wrote us off. We have played well in adverse situations all year long and that got us through today."

Michael Jordan shrugged off a horrid first half, in which he missed all 11 shots he attempted, with an incredible fourth quarter, scoring 20 of his 29 points, including 18 Bull points in a row.

But it was too little too late.

The reigning champion Bulls, seeking their fifth NBA crown in seven years, lost for only the second time in the Playoffs but still lead the best-of-seven Eastern Conference finals three games to one.

Chicago can still advance to the NBA finals with a home victory in game five on Wednesday. Game six, if needed, would be here Friday and a seventh game would be Sunday in Chicago.

Jordan and the Bulls trimmed a 21-point deficit to 79-78 with two minutes remaining, but Mourning made two free throws and a dunk in the final seconds to secure the triumph.

Now Mourning is confident Miami can pressure the Bulls on heir home court despite two earlier losses there.

"They gave us a lot of chances in the first two games but we didn't take advantage," Mourning said. "We made our shots and worked our offense like we know how to do.

"We're going to go with the same atitude. If we come out with the same physical and mental toughness, we'll get the job done."

Jamal Mashburn added 17 points for the Heat.

(AFP)

Tuesday's Deals at TSE

TEHRAN — A total of 2,194,284 shares, worth over Rls. 6.9 billion, were traded in 1,037 turns, for 959 applicants at the Tehran Stock Exchange on Tuesday.

In yesterday's deals the shares of 22 companies made gains, while those of 29 others declined.

The general price index for Tuesday's deals stood at 1880.54 points, down 4.83 points compared to the figure on Monday. (IRNA)

Friction Between Taleban and New Allies

MAZAR-I-SHARIF, Afghanistan — Friction between Taleban fighters and those of an opposing military commander who went over to the militia has erupted into violence, sources said Tuesday.

Followers of General Abdul Malik, a former associate of northern warlord Abdul Rashid Dostam, refused to hand weapons over to Taleban guards, the sources said. They added there had been several incidents on Monday and Tuesday.

Malik went over to the Taleban last week at the start of a rebellion within Dostam's ranks that culminated in the warlord losing his Mazar-i-Sharif stronghold in northern Afghanistan. Dostam is now in Turkey.

The town was quiet Tuesday but most shops have ignored a Taleban order to reopen.

The population appears very nervous and the streets empty at the slightest sign of trouble, correspondents said.

Mazar-i-Sharif airport is still closed to civilian traffic and the Uzbekistan frontier sealed off, sources said.

There was a reduced military presence in the city on Tuesday but Taleban fighters were starting to replace Malik's troops at key points.

Taleban troops advanced to the Salang Tunnel Tuesday on the strategic artery to the north after defeating resistance from opposition forces, Taleban officials said. (AFP)

(Contd From Pg. 1)

RUSSIA...

Meanwhile, an informed source in Kremlin said that Russian President Boris Yeltsin will cable a congratulatory message to Hojjatoleslam Khatami as soon as he returns from France.

(Contd From Pg. 1)

YELTSIN...

"Today I have taken the decision to dismantle all nuclear warheads from missiles directed at countries represented around this table," Yeltsin said.

His intervention came after he had requested a five-minute, unscheduled break in the ceremonies after the signature of the founding act on mutual relations, cooperation and security.

NATO leaders and even Yeltsin's own entourage were caught completely by surprise. "We have to talk to President Yeltsin about exactly what all this means," said U.S. State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns.

NATO reacted cautiously, welcoming the positive signal conveyed by the gesture but warning that it could not be a substitute for Russia ratifying the Start II treaty.

NATO spokesman Jamie Shea underlined that disarmed missiles could easily be rearmed while Start II, which the Russian Parliament is threatening not to ratify, provided a binding commitment to the destruction of strategic missiles.

The U.S. ratified the accord last year, signed in 1993 in the aftermath of the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

"Start II is not a unilateral measure, it cannot be reversed," Shea underlined. "It is still the best mechanism available to push the nuclear genie back into the bottle."

Tuesday's NATO-Russia accord sets out the terms for a new partnership between the once bitter adversaries. (AFP)

(Contd From Pg. 1)

RAFSANJANI'S...

nas. He is recognized internationally as a wise statesman and brilliant thinker.

During his two terms of office as president, Rafsanjani greatly contributed to the country's industrial and economic growth through his First and Second Five-Year Development Plans, mostly carried out in the infrastructure.

Furthermore, his experience of dealing with domestic affairs and international issues is of enormous value. In other words, he is a great asset both to the nation and the next government.

Since President Rafsanjani was not allowed under the Islamic Republic Constitution to run for the presidency for more than two terms, he was appointed by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei as the head of the State Expediency Council.

It is worth noting that the council was formed in February 1988 by the order of the late Leader Imam Khomeini to arbitrate on legal and theological questions in legislation passed by the Majlis in the event of a dispute between the supervisory Council of Guardians and the Parliament. The council comprised the six qualified religious jurists on the Council of Guardians and seven leading government officials.

However, recently the council was expanded by the Grand Leader to include more members, and Rafsanjani was appointed as its chairman for a period of five years. The council now also acts as a large advisory body to the Leader as well as arbitrating between the legislature and the executive and the Council of Guardians.

Given that the Expediency Council is the highest decision-making body in the country, Rafsanjani, at its top, can play a decisive role in helping Khatami carry out his moderate and reform-oriented agenda, fulfilling his promises to the nation.

Also, considering that the centrist group Kargozaran-e Sazandegi (G6), established by Rafsanjani's close aides, backed up Khatami in his presidential campaign, the president-elect will definitely enjoy the support of Rafsanjani and his camp.

That is good news for the nation, which means that the trend of construction and development will continue and Rafsanjani's experience and Khatami's large mandate will join up to build a better future for Iran.

(Contd From Pg. 1)

I TRY...

eration of other organizations.

Attending the press conference, Khatami answered questions by domestic and foreign reporters on different issues.

President-elect Mohammad Khatami said that the unprecedented turnout in the Friday elections demonstrated love of the nation for the Islamic Republic and its Leader and added under his administration special attention will be paid to the issues concerning the youth.

He stressed that the votes illustrated the stability and strength of the Islamic Republic and that the people in the first place voted for the revolution and stability of the country.

On relations with the U.S., he said that the key is in the hands of the American administration. He added that so far there has been no change in the attitude of the U.S. and American policies have always been hostile towards the Iranian revolution.

He said Iran will not give up its independence which he described as the main objective and outcome of the Islamic Revolution launched in 1979.

He stressed as long as the U.S. is after harming Iran's interests and independence, Iran will have no relations with the U.S. and will not tolerate any domination-seeking power. "Any change in our relations with the U.S. depends on change in attitude of the U.S.," he told reporters.

More on the massive turnout in the elections, the heaviest in the past 18 years, he said this glory and grandeur is owed to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei and the conscious presence of the people in the political scene.

He stressed that the vote was an expression of the right of making a choice and not an expression of opposition as interpreted by some foreign press.

He added that the people voted for the system and the independence of the country. The country has now reached a stage of stability. This has created the best opportunity to reinforce the pillars of a civil society and civil liberties within the framework of the constitution and further stabilize the system on the basis of the constitution under the guidelines of the Leader, he added.

Regarding the stunning turnout in the elections, he said that he is more proud of the vote than being surprised. This, he told reporters, leaves a heavy burden on his shoulders. "This vote is the vote of confidence in the system, the leadership and the revolution and is a sign of alertness of the people and their presence in the scene to decide their future."

On the composition of his Cabinet and whether there will be women ministers and if he is making the decision independently or seeking the advice of the Leader or consulting with the outgoing president, he said that his list of Cabinet ministers is under review.

"I have started review and consultations and it is naturally in consultation with the Leader." The list will be forwarded to the Majlis in August for approval, he added.

He pointed out that the country needs all the forces and talents it can muster and that he hoped to utilize the services of all of them in running the affairs of the state.

He said there is no reason not to give the women high posts in management of the country adding that appointing women ministers is under consideration. He also stressed on equal opportunity for women and laid emphasis on consolidating the foundation of the family.

The incoming president added that there is no restriction on presence of women in the highest echelon of management and other posts. The criteria is the potentials and capabilities and not the gender, said the president-elect.

Asked whether the outgoing President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani will have a paramount role in his administration, he said Rafsanjani is one of the most prominent figures of the revolution and whatever post he may hold, the future government will benefit from his views, ideas and thoughts.

He added that the leadership is the highest authority and the president holds the number two position and there is harmony among the three branches of the government.

The president-elect described the outgoing president as the backbone of the establishment who will put all his power and weight behind the new administration.

Whether he will introduce greater cultural freedom, he said it is a source of pride for the Islamic Republic of Iran that ideas and civil liberties are fully respected. He added that in all societies freedom is defined within the framework of constitution if security is to prevail in the society. One of the main duties of the president is implementation of the constitution except for areas that fall under the jurisdiction of the Leader.

Khatami said that rights of the people are safeguarded and the people in turn are expected to observe the boundaries defined by the constitution.

He added that in his election campaign special emphasis was laid on diversity and variety of views and unity against threats of external enemy. He said the objective is to establish social and individual security within the framework of constitution.

As for the latest Turkish incursion to northern Iraq, he said that Iran has full respect for territorial integrity of all countries including Iraq which he said is important for Iran.

He added the disputes should be settled through negotiations and expressed hope that the Turkish government will come to the same conclusion.

As for re-establishment of diplomatic relations with Egypt, the president-elect said that resumption of diplomatic ties depends on the elimination of differences.

He noted that Iran is in a position to set it own terms and conditions for establishment of relations and the most important criterion is protecting national interests and independence of Iran.

He added that Iran has all along been against terrorism and stressed that the Egypt should not heed the rumors and mischief that the U.S. is spreading. It would be better if Iran and Egypt joined hands against Israel which is the main source of state-sponsored terrorism.

On disputes with the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the president-elect said that Iran favors frank and sincere dialogue. He added that this is a matter between two neighboring countries and foreign intervention is neither to the interest of Iran nor UAE.

As for the Middle East peace process, he said as long as the rights of the Palestinians are not restored there could be no peace. Peace will prevail only when rights of the Palestinians are fulfilled, he said adding that Iran does not interfere in the process and it is for the Palestinians to take care of the matter.

However, Iran has the right to express its views on the issue and say whether it is right or wrong, he added.

Turning to the issue of the youth, one of the major blocks in the Friday polling, he said more than half the population of the country is below 18 and added that this is considered a great advantage to the revolution and the nation.

The participation of the young people in the course of the Iraqi-imposed war was a determining factor. In Friday's elections the youths also constituted the largest portion of the electorates, he told reporters.

The president-elect said that the reason the youths were so attracted to his platform during the election campaign was that he addressed the minds of the youth. "I told them to believe in themselves."

He stressed that the problems of the youth should be raised at their presence and with their participation. The grounds should be prepared for participation and presence of the young people in all cultural, scientific, educational, sports and political fields.

The incoming president added that under his administration special programs will be initiated for the youth and he would make sure that in all development programs the needs and demands of the youth are taken into consideration and ensured. (IRNA)

(Contd From Pg. 2)

MORE...

"On behalf of the government and people of Sudan and on my own behalf I am delighted to convey to your excellency our warmest and heartfelt felicitations on your election" as president of the Islamic Republic of Iran, said Al-Bashir in his message.

Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) Ezzedin al-Iraki on Monday felicitated the president-elect Khatami on his election victory.

In his message to Khatami, Al-Iraki wished success for the new president in serving the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Islamic ummah.

(Contd From Pg. 2)

PRESIDENT...

charge of the last year's public census with certificates of merit.

According to the public census launched last year, the population growth rate dropped to 1.96 percent last year from 2.7 percent in Iranian calendar year 1355 (March 1976-March 1977).

Literacy rate has risen from 61.78 percent in 1365 (1986-1987) to 79.5 percent last year.

Unemployment has been cut to 9.08 percent last year compared with the 14.19 percent in 1365.

(Contd From Pg. 5)

RUSSIA...

Last week, a Proton-5 rocket blasted off to put a U.S. TV satellite into orbit. Krunichev executives said that the company has seven more commercial launches scheduled for this year under contracts with foreign companies to put 19 satellites in space.

Krunichev has 20 contracts, worth $1 billion, lasting until the year 2001, the report said.

Also contributing to Russia's space revenues in 1996 were the Russian Space Agency, which brought in 25 percent of the money, and the Defense Ministry, with 15 percent, Krunichev said.

Russia's space program, deprived of its Soviet-era clout and funding, has suffered a series of setbacks recently and is struggling to keep up its prestige and find financing. (AFP)

(Contd from Pg. 11)

ISLAMIC ......

- ✓ Preparation of the agenda for the sessions and listing of bills.
- ✓ Reading out the agenda, motions and bills.
- ✓ Setting the timetable for deputies to make pre-agenda speeches, etc.
- ✓ Giving notice to the deputies in the session.
- ✓ Receiving the notices given by deputies and submitting them to the officials.
- ✓ Recording absence, and delays of deputies.
- ✓ Reading out the votes of the deputies.
- ✓ Filing the papers related to the Majlis.

The above tasks have been distributed among the secretaries by the Presidium.

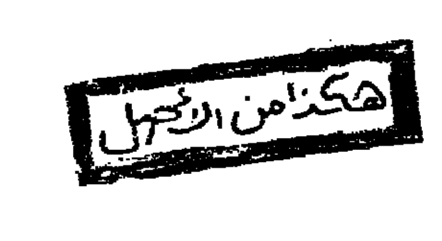
Vice-Speakers

In the absence of the Majlis Speaker, the first Vice-Speaker and in his absence the second Vice-Speaker will administer the session.

Administrative Managers

Each of the three administrative managers are responsible for supervision and proper implementation of each of the following:

- ✓ Financial and administrative affairs (including accounting and staff department).
- ✓ Communications and cultural affairs (including public relations, telex, telephone operators, libraries and printing house).
- ✓ General affairs and services (including disciplinary forces, provisions, maintenance of building and technical plants).
- ✓ The Majlis Speaker is the chief of the Presidium and of all Majlis offices. He is the chief representative of the Majlis in all contacts and meetings with other foreign and domestic delegations and is responsible for execution of the Articles of the Constitution and the Majlis Rules of procedure.



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(Contd From Pg. 5)

RUSSIA...

(Contd from Pg. 11)

ISLAMIC .....

Iranian Ambassador Sums Up President's Visit to Turkmenistan

(Contd From Pg. 1)

Originally, he said, it was agreed that Presidents Rafsanjani and Niyazov were to hold talks two days before the ECO meeting held in Tehran recently.

The Iranian ambassador pointed to the grand welcome accorded President Rafsanjani by the people of Charjo, 600 kilometers east of Ashkhabad, adding that people had qued up to 23 kilometers from the airport just to see the president arrive.

CHARDJOU, Turkmenistan (May 11) — President Hojjatoleslam Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani seen driving a combine, as part of the ceremony attended by his Turkmen counterpart Saparmurat Niyazov to mark the beginning season of cultivating wheat and producing of silk.

He described the people's great enthusiasm of meeting the president as seen by their shoulder-to-shoulder presence in the welcoming ceremony held in the midst of the season of cultivation of wheat and silk.

Further, the ambassador revealed that in an international tender, Iran's Ministry of Construction Jihad was the winner in a project to construct six wheat silos in Turkmenistan.

Mir Abutalebi said that ceremonies marking the start of the construction of the first silo in province of Marv, 500 kilometers east of the capital, was held simultaneously with President Rafsanjani's visit.

With the operation of the six silos, the province of Mary, he biggest region producing wheat in Turkmenistan, will have the opportunity to store 180 tons of wheat.

The silos will be constructed by the Ministry of Construction Jihad during one year costing 16.2 million dollars and will be equipped by Iranian experts with all modern apparatus of weighing, separating wheat and creating suitable heat.

In Ashkhabad, President Rafsanjani appeared among the professors and students of Magtumguly University and touched on the two countries' common cultural heritage.

President Rafsanjani alluded to the many favorable grounds for resusitating the ancient roots of friendship between the two countries and underscored his interest in expanding the exchange of professor and student.

In honor of his efforts in the five year after the independence of Turkmenistan for expanding relations between the two countries, President Rafsanjani participated in ceremonies in which the government and people of Turkmenistan appreciated Rafsanjani and granted him Turkmenistan citizenship certificate and symbol of Magtumguly.

At the magnificent celebration, Saparmurat Niyazov who had been exited praised Rafsanjani and announced that President Rafsanjani has played a great role in strengthening and stabilizing the Turkmenistan independence after the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

Iran's 45 year old ambassador has obtained his BS in road and construction engineering from Misuri University of Colombia, the U.S., and prior to his four year long service at the Foreign Ministry of the Islamic Republic of Iran, was engaged in industrial management for 12 years.

The ambassador described as fruitful and promising the visits and talks of the Iranian delegation in the area of the construction of the giant bridge connecting Turkmenistan with Uzbekistan, implementation of the 708 kilometer fiberoptic network, the 200 kilometer pipeline for transfer of gas, the factory for refining the water of the province of Mary, the Ashgabat transformator factor, the construction of a dam on Tajan River, etc.

He dwelt on the achievements of the ECO summit meet and said the atmosphere of the meeting was positive and constructive, adding that President Rafsanjani's speech drew the attention of the audience who supported his address.

The Kazakh president said, "I hope that Mr. Rafsanjani will back ECO in any capacity after the terminiation of his tenure as president of the Islamic Republic of Iran".

The ECO meet held for two days (May 13-14) in Ashkhabad and attended by heads of 10 member states and President of the Islamic Development Bank and with the message of the UN secretary general, finalized the results of the ECO meeting of foreign ministers held in Tehran last month.

The meeting approved agreements in principle pertaining to communication, telecommunications, transport and oil and gas pipelines.

The meeting also decided on the organization of expert committees to examine the precise measures of finalizing and approving such principles and their presentation in the next ECO summit.

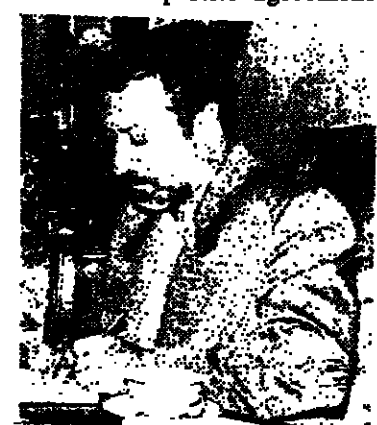
The Iranian ambassador said that among the most important achievement of this visit was the signing of an agreement binding Turkmenistan to export its gas to Turkey via Iran. The agreement was signed by the heads of the three countries in the presence of ten heads of states.

"The export of Turkmenistan gas, to start fter the completion of the construction of the pipelines, could reach an annual volume of 28 to 30 billion cubic meters, significantly cementing the solidarity of the countries involved," Mir Abutalebi said.

He added that the achievements of the conference may be summed up by saying that ECO has finally made a name in international circles, and is getting increasingly closer to the status it deserves in the region and the world.

Member countries of the organization, which account for some 300 million of the world's population, provide a tremendous market and, with tremendous energy resources, could assume a fundamental role in the future, the ambassador said.

Asked to comment on the fact that the tripartite agreement



MIR ABUTALEBI

signed by Turkmenistan with Iran and Turkey is almost simultaneous with another agreement it has signed with Pakistan, Mir Abutalebi said that Turkmenistan, as a producer, was justified in seeking all available ways of exporting its gas profitably and finding new markets for its goods.

"This is a natural right of a country," he stressed, and added that on this account Turkmenistan has put the pipeline project in its mutual sessions with Pakistan, also bringing it up in closing discussions of the summit in the form of a proposal.

The ambassador assured that in the matter of implementation Turkmenistan will choose the most practical means of exporting its goods, alluding to means that are most secure and economical.

He said this is a point that will only be finally decided after an analysis of the technical and economic studies of the expert delegation.

The ambassador also referred to other promising agreements conluded during the president's visit, such as the construction of the giant bridge linking Turkmenistan with Uzbekistan, the implementation of the 708-meter fiberoptic network, the 200-kilometer pipeline for the transfer of gas (above-cited), the water-refining plant of Marv Province, Ashkhabad transformator plant, and the dam construction over Tajan River.



ASHKHABAD, Turkmenistan (May 12) — Turkmen President Saparmurat Niyazov and President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani of Iran at a ceremony held to grant the citizenship certificate of Turkmenistan to the Iranian president. Niyazov said that Iran has played a key role in preservation of stability and independence of Turkmenistan after disintegration of the former Soviet Union.

He elaborated on the outstanding achievements of the ECO ministerial summit, and said the meeting took place in a positive and constructive atmosphere with President Rafsanjani's speech drawing attention from his listeners who keenly interested in the subjects he talked about.

"Worthy of mention is that based on a protocol signed in Ashkhabad on May 14, the presidents of Turkmenistan and Pakistan, officials of the U.S. coroporation UNOCAL and the Saudi Arabian Delta Oil Company, all four parties agreed that at the end of the current year the technical and economic requirements on the oil and gas pipeline project from Turkmenistan's southeast oil zones shall have been completed and that drilling and laying operations were expected to commence by the start of 1998.

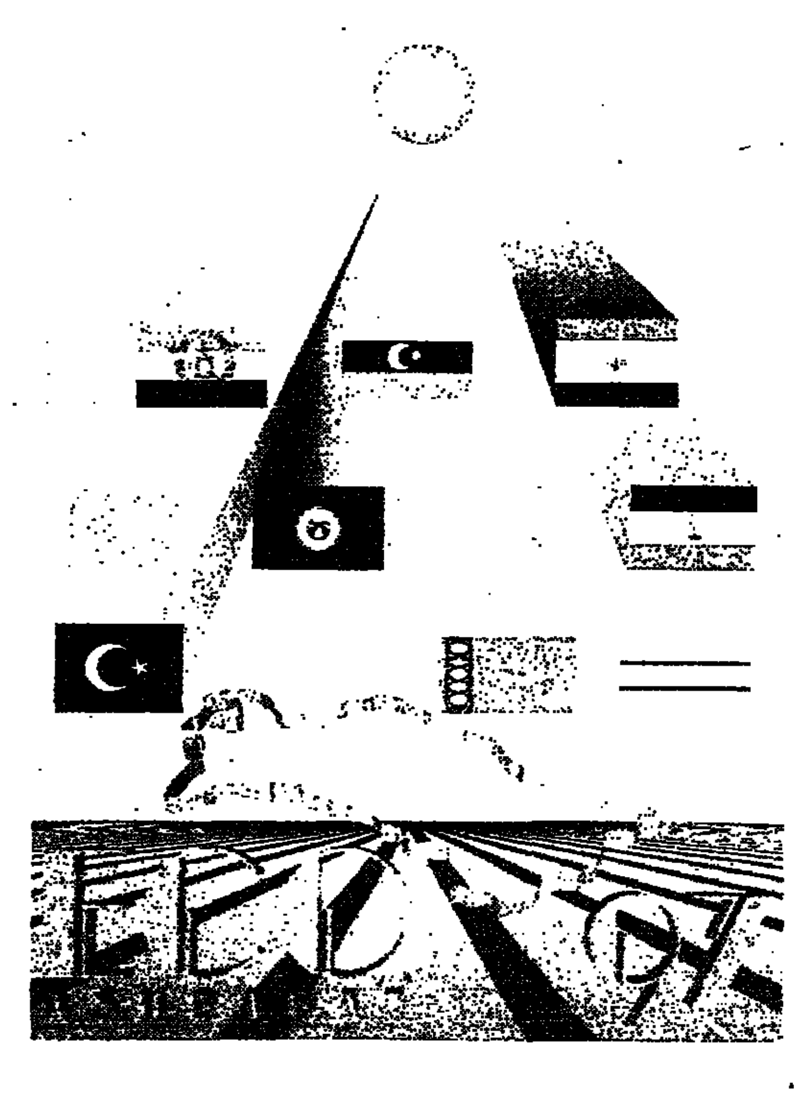
The pipeline, which is to pass through the entire breadth of Afghanistan and Pakistan and up to the coasts of the Sea of Oman, is estimated to cost between $3.8 to $4 billion and will be financed by the investment arms of the two previously mentioned oil companies.

Considering the internal fighting in Afghanistan and the security problem that it poses to technical research and implementation of the above-cited project, Mir Abutalebi, in response to a question as to how he envisioned the project to work, said: "It is better not to tint the problem politically but to look at it from the economic perspective. In my opinion, looking at it that way would be better," adding that it is common knowledge that Pakistan and India are customers of Turkmenistan's gas."

He further said that these two countries can look for sellers nearer their borders and could be nearer to their goal.

Elaborating on the issue of security in Afghanistan when asked if it will hamper the implementation of the project, he said that it should be viewed from the economic perspective and the costs required in providing the needed security.

"In my opinion, the results of technical and economic studies should provide the necessary answer to (the security fears) of both countries and their Arab and American partners," Mir Abutalebi said.



At any rate, the ambassador added, we do not see the laying of these pipelines as a competition outside of the tripartite agreement nor will it be an obstacle because Turkmenistan is capable of exporting an annual 90 billion cubic meters of gas and 4 million tons of oil.

"If these two agreements are to be simultaneously implemented still Turkmenistan's full capacity would not be exhausted," he noted.

At the close of the interview, the talks shifted to the Mashhad-Sarakhs-Tajan railway and the ambassador, asked to evaluate the extent of world attention on the opening of the railway last year and the approaching one-anniversary celebration, said that the opening of the railway linking Iran to Central Asia is the second phenomenal event after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the event, therefore, has a global impact.

Mir Abutalebi said he predicted the railway opening would be welcomed overwhelmingly by world leaders, citing Pakistan's President Nawaz Sharif's address in which the latter expressed his hope that the Kerman-Zahedan railway track would soon become operational so that Pakistan can also have access to Central Asia via the Mashhad-Saraks-Tajan railway and the work of regional countries facilitated.

The above points indicate the significance of the railway track, he said, adding that there are some problems that remain to be threshed out and would be resolved gradually.

"I mean the problem of coordination among countries, introducing tariffs, improving the administrative and organizational structures, infrastructure of the railroads, manufacture of wagons, etc., which we are trying to solve gradually", the ambassador said.

Mir Abutalebi added that in accordance with the targets set, with the gradual removal of barriers some 10 million tons of goods annually will be transferred from this railroad by the year 2000.

Asked if there is the possibility of the railway serving passengers, Mir Abutalebi said,"Yes, definitely."

He added that after the one-year anniversary celebration of the railway passenger trains will be able to operate between Iran and Turkmenistan and vice-versa.

"Unfortunately, the passenger service was postponed due to problems on the side of the Turkmens," he said.

On what those problems were, Mir Abutalebi alluded to the fixing of necessary criteria for issuance of visas and customs rules and said the work is a novel one which would naturally cause problems to arise.

"A train crossing different countries and with a termination point as far as Europe would involve many hassles," he said.

"Customs and border officials need to receive training and be provided with the necessary facilities for incoming and outgoing passeners," he said, adding that these are but the most preliminary of preparations called for.

New Mexico Grandmother "Holds Up" Bank by Mistake

ALBUQUERQUE — A New Mexico grandmother accidentally held up a bank when she handed in a deposit slip on which a prankster had scrawled a holdup message, police said on Friday.

The 61-year-old woman and her daughter made the deposit at the drive-up window of an Albuquerque Bank and were waiting for a receipt on Thursday when police cars surrounded them and officers ordered them out of their vehicle at gunpoint. (Reuter)

Drug Dealer Grandmother Arrested

NOTTINGHAM, England — A 68-year-old grandmother ran a three-generation family narcotics business out of a low-rent council house, selling heroin hidden in children's chocolate eggs, a court heard Tuesday.

Prosecutor Steven Coupland told Nottingham Crown Court that Eva Swanwick was the "banker" in a family drugs business that retailed heroin on the street at 1,600 pounds (1600 dollars) an ounce. (AFP)

Juppe Says Bowing Out Will Help Center-Right Win

PARIS — French Prime Minister Alain Juppe said yesterday his plan to bow out would help the center-right win re-election but the opposition Socialists said the government was floundering with neither policies nor leaders.

Juppe, stunned by a left-wing upset in the first round of parliamentary elections, said his departure after Sunday's runoff would give President Jacques Chirac new last-minute arguments to convince voters to re-elect the Conservatives.

Juppe told RTL Radio a center-right victory was "probable" but conceded it was "possible" the left would win the runoff. He said he was sacrificing himself to help the center-right push for change with new faces.

Chirac, basking in the glory of hosting a summit of NATO leaders and Russian President Boris Yeltsin on Tuesday, was due to address the nation on television at 8 p.m. (1800 GMT) in a bid to bolster his center-right allies.

Socialist Party leader Lionel Jospin said that voters should "democratically turn the page" and that Juppe's departure underscored the disarray of the ruling coalition, made up of the Gaullist RPR and the centrist UDF.

"We already did not know what the policy of the RPR and the UDF was in this campaign, since they refused to accept their record, did not publish their plans and hid their intentions for the future," Jospin said.

Far-right leader Jean-Marie le Pen said Chirac had acted like a sea captain throwing an overweight passenger overboard because his ship was leaking. (Reuter)

LYON, France (May 26): French Socialist Party leader Lionel Jospin arrives for a meeting in Lyons after the Socialist-led opposition inflicted the ruling rightwing coalition with its worst electoral defeat in the history of the Fifth Republic. In the first round of the advanced legislative elections the left led the right by more than 8 points in a stunning upset of poll predictions. (AFP PHOTO)

Burmese Riot Police Block NLD Congress

RANGOON — Hundreds of armed riot police were deployed Tuesday to stop supporters of pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi meeting at her home for a party congress which the ruling junta said was a propaganda ploy.

The show of force was effective, keeping all but a handful of party leaders from entering the compound in the morning, but analysts also described it as restrained in that no incidents were reported.

The barricades were withdrawn hours later, apparently when it became clear there would be no public attempt to breach the security cordon.

A defiant NLD meanwhile issued a statement urging Burma's military rulers to convene a Parliament as soon as possible to honor the results of elections which the NLD won in May 1990.

A senior Rangoon official said in a faxed message Tuesday that authorities have had no choice but to bar the meeting, because the NLD "deliberately" failed to submit a formal request to hold a political gathering.

By forcing authorities to act, and by inviting diplomats and journalists as well as party members, the NLD hoped to exploit the situation "for propaganda purpose," the message said.

Witnesses reported barbed-wire barricades blocking access from the early hours Tuesday to a broad area around Aung San Suu Kyi's home and nearby party headquarters.

Diplomats from several countries, invited to attend the opening of the two-day congress, were turned back at the barricades. One reported being turned away "six times at six different places."

Riot police also guarded access to the homes of NLD co-vice chairmen Tin Oo and Kyi Maung, the witnesses said. It was described as the widest anti-NLD security cordon in recent years. (AFP)

German Court Convicts East Berlin Spymaster Wolf

DUESSELDORF, Germany — Legendary former East German spymaster Markus Wolf was found guilty in a German court on Tuesday of three kidnappings during the cold war and handed a two year suspended sentence.

The trial was the latest attempt to punish the suave man who ran East Germany's foreign intelligence network for over 30 years after a 1993 treason conviction was overturned in 1995.

Wolf was found guilty of organizing the kidnapping of a Ministry for State Security (STASI) official who had fled to the West and the abduction of a West Berlin secretary whom the authorities hoped to persuade to spy for the East.

The court said Wolf, 74, was also behind the arrest of an East German whom the STASI tried to force to sign defamatory statements about former Chancellor Willy Brandt, then mayor of West Berlin.

"I suppose I should be able to live with this," Wolf told a news conference after the judgement was read out, noting that prosecutors had demanded a three-and-a-half year jail term.

Wolf has denied all the charges and said he was being punished by what he called a political trial as a substitute for bringing to book former communist East German leaders. (Reuter)

Manila-Beijing Row Mounts Over Rocks

MANILA — A row between the Philippines and China over barely visible rocks in the south China Sea escalated on Tuesday when Beijing protested against the arrest of 21 Chinese fishermen in the disputed area.

Chinese consul-general Shi Bingyi demanded the release of the fishermen, saying they were in Chinese territory when a Philippine navy ship apprehended the vessel and its crew last week off Scarborough Shoal, which both countries claim.

The latest diplomatic clash between the two countries broke out while Filipino and Chinese senior officials were meeting in Beijing to try to defuse growing tension over their rival claims to tiny islands and rocky outcrops in the south China Sea.

"The Chinese fishermen have every right to fish in Huang Yan Island (Scarborough Shoal) because it's part of Chinese territory," a Filipino diplomat quoted Shi as saying. (Reuter)

S.Korean President Backs Down on Spending Furore



SEOUL — South Korea's beleaguered president, Kim Young-Sam, on Tuesday bowed to public pressure and agreed to make a national address on the explosive issue of his 1992 election spending.

Only last week, Kim had appeared to rule out any public statement, but his refusal to comment sparked public outrage and veiled calls for his resignation.

Opposition parties allege that his campaign was partly bankrolled by the scandal-hit Hanbo Group and far exceeded legal spending limits. On Monday, they demanded Parliament to organize an independent inquiry, and called on Kim to apologize.

A presidential Blue House spokesman said Kim would make a statement on Friday.

"The national address will deal with the election fund issue, but don't try to guess the exact content," an aide to spokesman Yoon Yeo-Joon quoted him as saying.

Kim was quoted as saying last week that campaign finance records no longer existed, and that raking up the issue would only drag the country into deeper turmoil.

Kim called on all political parties to show "apologetic feelings" for past abuses, and work to reform the system.

Angered by those comments, opposition leaders warned that South Koreans might demand his resignation, without themselves calling on him to step down. (Reuter)

IRA Suspect Names Her Baby "Ray of Sunshine"

LONDON — IRA bomb suspect Roisin Mcaliskey, taken from prison to have her baby in a London hospital, on Tuesday named her daughter Loinnir, which in Irish means "sun shining through a dark cloud."

"I think that my grand-daughter has been named very appropriately and beautifully," said Irish civil rights campaigner Bernadette Mcaliskey, Nee Devlin, who has been fighting for six months for her daughter's release.

The 25-year-old prisoner had been held in Britain's high security Holloway Prison since last year pending extradition to Germany for questioning about an Irish Republican Army mortar attack at a British army base in Osnabrueck.

Depsite a difficult pregnancy and protest from the Dublin government and Roman Catholic politicians, Britain had consistently refused bail requests. (Reuter)

Ousted Sierra Leone Leader Says He Still President

ABIDJAN — Sierra Leone's ousted leader Ahmad Tejan Kabbah said from exile on Tuesday he was still the president despite the declared takeover of power by soldiers.

Kabbah, who fled to neighboring Guinea as Sunday's coup unfolded, was asked in a BBC Africa service radio interview whether he would try to take back his job, now claimed by coup leader Major Johnny Paul Koromah.

"It is not a question of taking back my job. I am the president of Sierra Leone," Kabbah said in the interview monitored in Abidjan.

"Somebody is just masquerading as president," he said.

"I am sad and angry because I am a Sierra Leonean and I see and I hear and I know that a group of hooligans are destroying my country," Kabbah added.

Residents of the capital said the coup by lower-ranking soldiers did not appear to have the full backing of the army. Koromah was freed from Freetown's maximum security prison where he was detained on charges of plotting against Kabbah.

The coup forces stormed the prison and distributed arms to hundreds of inmates who joined their cause. (Reuter)

Asian Stock M...
Generally

...Space-Launch Revenue Rise to $600 Million

Italy to Pha...

Asian Stock Markets Close Generally Mixed

HONG KONG - Asian stock markets closed generally mixed Monday, with the key index in Hong Kong rising to a record high for the second consecutive session.

The Hang Seng Index, the Hong Kong market's key indicator of blue chips, rose 242.96 points, or 1.7 percent, closing at 14,574.64. On Friday, the index had jumped 119.68 points.

Brokers said the Hong Kong market was boosted by Friday's record rally on wall street and continued buying of red chips, stocks listed in Hong Kong but controlled by mainland Chinese companies.

The red chip buying was triggered by an oversubscribed initial public offering of shares last week by Beijing enterprises holdings, the investment arm of the Beijing municipal government.

In Tokyo, share prices closed mixed, with the major indexes rising slightly.

The 225-issue Nikkei Stock average gained 34.50 points, or 0.17 percent, closing at 20,043.50. On Friday, the average had gained 131.61 points, or 0.66 percent.

The Tokyo stock price index of all issues listed on the first section added 4.72 points, or 0.32 percent, to 1,494.61. it had climbed 12.96-points, or 0.88 percent, on Friday.

The U.S. dollar's recent comeback against the yen helped push shares of blue-chip exporters higher. Friday's strong showing in New York, where the Dow Jones industrial average rallied 87.78 points to a record 7,345.91, also encouraged investors Monday in Tokyo.

The dollar was quoted at 115.89 yen in late afternoon, up 0.25 yen from late Friday in Tokyo but below its 115.96 yen in New York Friday.

The market was closed in the Philippines because of flash floods in the country.

Taipei: Share prices closed slightly higher. The market's key weighted stock price index rose 15.96 points to 8,194.66 after Saturday's 34.32-point advance.

Sydney: Australian shares continued their recent ascent and hit another all-time high, lifted by strong gains in banks and cyclical stocks, such as building materials companies. The all ordinaries index rose 20.9 points to 2,584.8.

Wellington: New Zealand share prices closed generally higher, with market giant Telecom Corp. Of New Zealand consolidating much of its gains achieved earlier in the day. The Nzse-40 capital index rose 7.36 points to 2,311.05.

Bangkok: Thai share prices closed sharply lower on a sell-off in banking and finance stocks following the collapse of the merger between two Thai financial institutions. The stock exchange of Thailand index fell 12.77, or 2.1 percent, to 568.36.

Seoul: Share prices closed lower on a technical correction following recent sharp gains. The Korea composite index fell 6.18 points to 718.99.

Singapore: Share prices closed lower in light trading. The straits times industrials slipped 0.96 point to 2,056.32.

Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian share prices closed mostly lower, although the key index edged up slightly. The composite index rose 2.99 points to 1,081.19.

Jakarta: the stock exchange's composite index rose 4.673 points, closing at 658.522.

Russia Space-Launch Revenues to Rise to $600 Million

MOSCOW — Russia's largest rocket manufacturer said Monday that revenues from commercial satellite launches will rise to between $500 million and $600 million this year.

The Krunichev Co. said its booster rockets accounted for 60 percent of the $470 million earned by Russia from commercial space launches in 1996, the ITAR-TASS news agency reported.

Krunichev is the maker of the Proton booster rocket, launches of which were temporarily halted after a failed Mars mission last year. The company maintains its rocket was not at fault.

(Contd on Pg. 14)

OECD Grapples With Global Trade, Jobs, Bribes

PARIS — Ministers from the 29 countries of the OECD on Monday issued a united message of confidence in the economic benefits of increasingly global trade but acknowledged they had to work hard to sell "globalization" to the public.

The annual two-day meeting of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development finished with the now traditional declaration of support for budgetary and spending restraint and urged OECD governments to keep purging state finances.

But they coupled their call for further financial rigour and their pledge of faith in evermore global trade competition with a qualifier — that social cohesion should not take a back seat at a time of mass unemployment.

The meeting this year was chaired by French Finance Minister Jean Arthuis, who clearly convinced other OECD ministers to make their words more palatable to the public, at a time when French voters have swung away from his center-right government in the first round of a parliamentary election.

"Ministers underlined their conviction that globalization offers a real opportunity to improve living standards in their own countries and to allow all countries to participate in sustainable world development," an OECD communique said.

"The challenge for governments is to pursue policies whereby the benefits of globalization are fully realized and widely shared by all groups of society," it said.

Some countries would be stuck with high unemployment for some time. But the communique struck a balance between the OECD's advice of greater labor-market flexibility and equality.

"Ministers recognized that the gap between the 'haves' and the 'have nots' within some OECD countries may have widened, the latter more often than not being less skilled," it said.

The OECD expects economic growth of 2.5 to three percent in 1997-98 in a climate of low inflation and growth was likely to be more balanced across the OECD member countries, it said.

But it warned that many OECD countries' budget deficits and debt were still too high and further cutbacks would be needed, primarily on the state spending side.

Highlighting the policy dilemmas involved at an organization whose main goal is promoting a more "liberal" economic strategy is a report which shows structural unemployment has risen during the 1990s.

Overall unemployment among 23 of the 29 member countries — the most recent members are not included — rose to 7.7 percent in 1996 from 6.1 percent in 1990.

Structural unemployment, which strips out the portion of joblessness attributed to the ups and downs of the economic cycle, stood at 7.1 percent in 1996, versus 6.8 percent at the start of the decade, the report says.

The two-day OECD summit, which gathers a mixture of finance, trade, foreign and social affairs ministers, also hammered out an agreement calling on member countries to introduce laws by April next year to criminalize bribery of state officials in international business transactions.

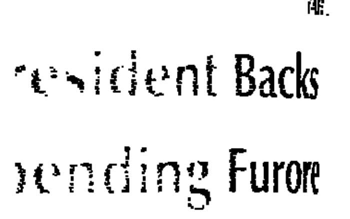
To appease French and German concern that this should not be done in a haphazard way, the ministers also agreed to open talks on a treaty which would ensure more uniform legislation in the fight against international business corruption.

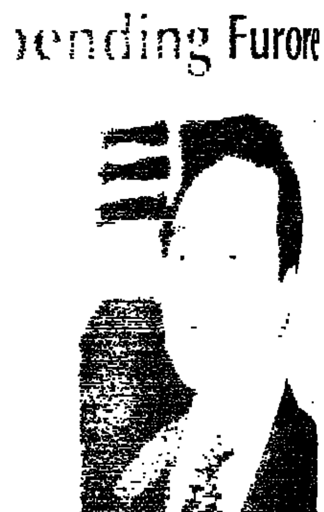
While he remained straight-faced, it was clear that French meeting chairman Arthuis had a job keeping press attention on the OECD'S two-day meeting amid news that French center-right prime minister planned to step down after the second election vote next Sunday.

France's opposition Socialist Party took a surprise lead in the first round and is now seen as having a chance of taking power as the center-right tries to contend with an electorate disappointed by its promises to tackle record unemployment and its economic policy of austerity.

(Reuter)

Italy to Phase Out Top-Heavy Pensions System





ROME — In a move fraught with political risks, Italy is about to launch a radical reform of its very generous retirement pensions system, in a bid to slash spiralling social spending in the run-up to European Monetary Union.

The center-left government of Romano Prodi has made joining EMU in 1999 its top economic priority and has enbarked on a far-reaching program of welfare cuts as a way of meeting the tight economic criteria for this laid down in the Maastricht Treaty.

The last phase of this reform will affect retirement pensions, currently the most generous of any country in the industrialized world.

Prodi said that the changes would be introduced from January next year.

At present, the Italian system allows workers in the private sector to retire after 35 years at work, often well before they reach 65 for a man or 60 for a woman.

Public workers may retire after only 19 and a half years for men and unmarried women and after 14 and half years for married women.

These retirees get 80 percent of their annual salary based on the five years in which they earned the most.

A million people in the private sector and 700,000 ex-civil servants currently benefit from this system of early retirement which the government particularly wants to reform.

"Paying retirement pensions to people aged 50 or 52 cannot be justified in a country which is incapable of curbing unemployment in the Mezzogiorno," - the impoverished southern part of the peninsula, the leader of the ex-communist majority, Massimo D'Alema said recently.

According to the director-general of the INPS National Pensions Fund, Fabio Trizino, the cost of the so-called "baby pensioners" amounts to 24,000 billion lira ($14 billion) a year.

The figure corresponds almost exactly, according to forecasts made in Brussels, to the savings rome has to make next year if its deficit is not to exceed the ceiling of three percent of gross national product, laid down for joining EMU.

According to figures given in Brussels, Italy must save 25,000 billion lira ($15 billion) to meet the ceiling required by the Maastricht Treaty.

"In Italy, 60 percent of social spending goes on retirement pensions and only 1.3 percent is spent on unemployed youth, whereas the European average is 40 percent for pensions and 6.0 percent for youth," said Luciano Violante, president of the Chamber of Deputies.

The reform of the pensions system is a high risk political exercise as previous government leaders have found to their cost.

In 1994, a million people poured on to the streets to demonstrate against plans by the right-wing government of Silvio Berlusconi to reform the retirement system. The reform was dropped.

"We realize the scope and the problems inherent in such a reform," said Prodi, who promised to hold in-depth talks with all the social partners.

In 1995, the government of Lamberto Dini reached agreement with the unions on a reform which called notably for the phasing out of early retirement by 2013. This period is now viewed as much too long.

Though negotiations have not yet begun, 31,000 teachers fearful that they might miss the opportunity if they wait have applied for early retirement. The government has moved to block these applications which would add from 7,000 to 8,000 billion lira (almost $2 billion) to the deficit of the INPS.

A total of some 100,000 civil servants have applied in recent weeks for early retirement and at the end of April, policemen, Carabinieri and firemen demonstrated against proposals to raise their retirement age from 50 to 60.

(AFP)





Shahid

By: Ayatollah Murtada Mutahhari

Part 16

The secret of Imam Hussein's immortality lies in the fact that on the one hand, his activity was logical and rational, and on the other hand, it evoked deep emotions. The Imams gave the most judicious direction when they resorted to weeping for him, for it is weeping that has firmly rooted his movement in the hearts of the people. We again wish that our preachers knew how to utilize this emotional treasure.

When her father gave Fatimah al-Zahra (S) the well-known liturgical formula (which we, also, usually repeat after prayers, or at bedtime), she went to the grave of her great-uncle, Hamza ibn Abd al-Muttalib, and collected earth from there to make a *tasbih* (rosary). What is the significance of her action? The grave of a *shahid* is sacred. The earth of its vicinity is sacred. She required a *tasbih* for counting the liturgical formula. Actually it made no difference whether the *tasbih* was made of stone, wood or clay. The earth could be taken from anywhere. But she preferred to take it from the vicinity of the grave of the *shahid*. Her action signified respect for him. After the *shahadat* of Imam Hussein (AS), the epithet, *"Sayyid al-Shuhada,"* was taken from Hamza and conferred upon the grandson of his brother. Now, if anyone seeks the blessings of the grave of a *shahid*, he should make a *tasbih* from the earth of Imam Hussein's mausoleum.

We have to offer our prayers. At the same time, we do not regard it as permissible to perform prostration on rugs, or anything which is edible or which may be worn. Therefore, we keep a piece of clay with us. The Imams have said that it is better to prostrate oneself on the earth of the grave of a *shahid*. If possible, the earth of Karbala should be obtained, for it emits the smell of the *shuhada*. While offering your prayers, you can put your head on any earth, but if for this purpose you use the earth which has had some sort of contact with the *shuhada*, your reward will be enhanced a hundred times. An Imam has said, "Perform prostration on the grave of my grandfather, Hussein ibn Ali (AS). When a person offering prayers performs prostration on that sacred earth, he pierces seven veils." The idea is to urge people to realize the importance of the *shahid*, and to caress the earth of his grave.

It is the usual practice, in the modern world, to dedicate a day every year to a certain group or class of people, to pay homage to them. Mothers' Day and Teachers' Day are examples of such days. But we do not find any day being dedicated to the *shuhada* by any people, except the Muslims. It is the day of Ashura. Its night may also be regarded as *shahid* Night.

We have already said that the logic of a *shahid* is a combination of the logic of a lover and that of a reformer. If the personalities of a reformer and of a gnostic lover are combined, a *shahid* comes into existence. *(To be contd.)*

اعلَموا انَّ الدُّنيا حلوُها و مرُّها حلم.

This world's sweetness and bitterness are both transient like a dream.

THE ASHURA UPRISING



Our nation has understood that the slogan "Every day is Ashura, and every land is Karbala" revives, in the hearts of the faithful, the getting together for prayers and recitation of elegies for the disciples of Imam Hussein (AS) on the day of the Ashura Event.

The Captives' Caravan

Part 9

Here and now I declare my faith in the religion, to defend whose principles your noble father sacrificed his all, and I want you, as the only true believer in this assembly of men, to bear witness to this fact. I do not care for the consequences of proclaiming my faith and denouncing the errant usurper, who is seated here on the throne and who is the very embodiment and incarnation of the worst qualities in mankind and an epitome of all that is hardly he had finished saying this, when Yazid, now mad with rage and smarting under the insults and exposure, such as he had never expected, shouted a command to his guards to drag away the ambassador and to chop off his head. His orders were carried out by his bodyguards immediately.

A pin-drop silence descended on the court. All the courtiers were stunned by the boldness of the foreigner who has spoken out so boldly, in spite of knowing the dire consequences that would follow. Many of them admitted in their heart of hearts the truth of all that he had said and contrasted their own pusillanimity with his courage.

During this time, Yazid was gulping down cup after cup of wine to soothe his frayed nerves. Everybody was waiting anxiously to see on whom he would wreak his vengeance for the insults he had suffered in open court. They had not long to wait, for the tyrant, turning in the direction of Ali Zainal Abedeen, shouted: "You there! You were responsible for the insults which that wretch hurled at me and I shall make you pay dearly for aiding and abetting him, for encouraging him, to denounce me and praise adding and abetting him, for encouraging him, to denounce me and praise your father." He paused for a while as if his intoxicated head was muddled and confused in conjuring up what worst punishment he could inflict on Ali Zainal Abedeen. After a few seconds, he confirmed: "I shall get your head cut off here and now, in full view of everybody — before your mother, sisters and aunts and before all who are assembled here." Then, as if on second thought, he added: "No, No, killing you will not be enough. I shall torture you to death so that you will die by inches. I shall subject you such tortures the like of which the world has never seen, so that your life will become a living death, so that every day, every hour, every minute, you will yearn and pine for death to relieve you of all your sufferings."

As if this diabolical thought of devising cruellest tortures had soothed his sadistic mind, he burst into a loud, hoarse guffaw. It was the hysterical laughter of a drunken demon who had no control over his nervous system.

At this stage, Ali Zainal Abedeen in a feeble but clear, firm voice said: "Yazid, the tortures and ignominies which you have so far inflicted on me can never be surpassed by anything that your crokked mind can think up. For me the worst possible torture has been my standing here with my mother and sisters, with my aunts and cousins, without any veils to cover their heads and faces. Do not for a moment think that I am intimidated or fightened by your threats. We, descendants of the Holy Prophet of Islam, peace be on Him, have been trained from childhood to face afflictions and suffereings. We know that those who are loved by God are tried by Him and if they remain steadfast and true to their faith in Him, then only He bestows His Divine favors on them in the life hereafter, which is permanent and not transitory like this worldly life."

The retort of Ali Zainal Abedeen evoked spontaneous murmurs of admiration from the courtiers who, in spite of everything, could not help admitting to themselves that he was a true scion of the house of Muhammad (S.A.S.), whose faith in God, whose belief in the cause of Islam, nothing could shake or diminish.

On hearing the murmurs of admiration, Yazid, despite his drunken state, got scared. His reeling head conjured up possiblities of his courtiers staging an uprising against him in favor of Ali Zainal Abedeen. The cunning nature which he had inherited from his crafty father came to his rescue. He feigned a loud laughter and said: "Why are you blaming me, Ali for what has befallen you all? It was God Who inflicted this punishment on you and your family for your father's obduracy and defiance of my lawful authority. You got what you deserved according to the Will of God."

"No, O tyrant," said Ali Zainal Abedeen, "do not dare to distort and misinterpret the words of God. He in His infinite Wisdom gives time and opportunities to men to see whether they act with justice or tyrannically ride roughshod over helpless, defenceless people. *(To be contd.)*

IMAM HUSSEIN IBN ALI (AS)

PART 17

3. War of starvation. It was the most effective weapon used by the Ummayyads. The Muslim ummah felt humiliated and unable to challenge the rulers.

As this policy was based on fighting the opposition forces with their daily bread and depriving them of the means to earn their living, Mu'awiyah employed the most horrendous way to besiege the followers of Ahlul Bait (AS) in particular. His recorded directive, which he sent to his governors in this respect said: "... See to it that whoever is proven, by irrefutable evidence, to love Ali and his household, his name is erased from the public register, and his pay and food allotment are dropped."

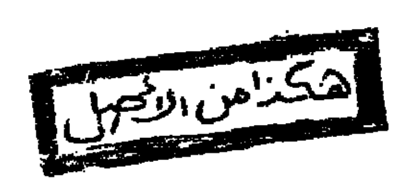
One can see for himself the repercussions of this inhuman policy, adopted by the Ummayyad house to corrupt people and numb their conscience. It was not a temporary line of action. Mu'awiyah made it a consistent policy throughout the twenty years of his rule (41-60 A.H.).

4. Breaking the bonds holding the Muslim ummah as one entity by stirring up the nationalist, tribal and regional spirit among the different groups. Thus, plunging the Muslims into infighting at the expense of their real opposition to the oppressive rule of the Ummayyads. Mutual spite and hatred between the Arab tribes were awakened and soon differences and violence began to surface. The tribes of Qays and Mudhar fought each other. The people of Yemen and those of Medina jumped at each other's throats. And so was the case among the tribes of Iraq! In the same way sectarianism was revived between the Arabs and non-Arab Muslims who came to be his torically known as al-Mawali. This policy of ignorance was expressively reflected in the poetry of many poets like Miskeen al-Darimi, al-Farazdaq, Jareer, al-Akktal and others.

5. Assassination of Imam Hassan bin Ali (AS) as he was the legitimate symbol of original Islam.

(To be contd.)





هكذا من الأصل



News From the World of Medicine

Easy Ulcer Test

The usual way to detect the bacterium that causes most ulcers has been to pass a tube down the patients' throat and into the stomach to remove tissue for a biopsy. Called an endoscopy, the procedure requires sedation and is usually performed in a hospital or outpatient center. Now theere's a new way to document infection in as many as four of five sufferers: they simply drink a special liquid and exhale.

The recently FDA-approved method can be done in a doctor's office, and the results — obtained by sending breath samples to a lab — are as accurate as an endoscopy. The test is now being used by some gastroenterologists and may soon become available to primary-care physicians.

(Courtesy Reader's Digest)

Turkish Court Opens Smoking Damages Case

ANKARA — A Turkish court this week began hearing the case of a man seeking damages of one billion lira ($7,200) from the company that sells Marlboro cigarettes in Turkey, state-run Anatolian news agency reported.

It said Yilmaz Sayin, who smoked five packets a day, was seeking damages from Philip Morris Sabanci Pazarlama Ve Satis A.S. over loss of health due to smoking.

The company sells Marlboro cigarettes under agreement with U.S.-based Philip Morris Inc.

The judge adjourned the hearing to a later date to give the claimant's lawyers time to consider their response to the defence, Anatolian said.

The company declined to comment on the case.

The lawsuit said 62-year-old Yilmaz Sayin, who started smoking in his 20s, had smoked only Marlboro cigarettes.

It said he was suffering from heart, eye and prostate ailments and his left leg was paralyzed because of smoking. *(Reuter)*

Britain Back in UNESCO on July 1

PARIS — Britain's Labour government told UNESCO on Monday it would rejoin the organization on July 1, a dozen years after the Conservatives slammed the door, in order to take part in the organization's aid to poor countries.

"My government has decided to rejoin UNESCO...my aim is that this should take effect from July 1 this year," Secretary of State for International Development Clare Short told UNESCO's executive board in a message delivered by aide Tony Bazeley.

"The object is to maximize UNESCO's effectiveness and impact, particularly in poorest countries and for the poorest people. That is an important goal for us in all our development endeavors," Short's message said.

The Labour government, which came to power on May 1, announced two weeks ago that it would rejoin the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Conservative former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher had taken Britain out of UNESCO in 1985, a year after the United States withdrew. Between them, the two countries took away 30 percent of the budget of the organization which they accused of poor management and anti-Western bias. Washington has yet to rejoin though it says it is studying the matter. *(Reuter)*

Hong Kong Schools Ban Japanese Toy

HONG KONG — Hong Kong parents, irked by the cost of buying Japan's latest toy craze, have been joined by teachers, who have started to ban the 'tamagotchi' from classrooms.

The egg-shaped, palm-sized device has proven so disruptive that the territory's education department has told principals they can ban children from bringing the toy into school, the press reported Tuesday.

One headmistress who has laid down the law is Tang Mei-Sin of the Baptist Lui Ming Choi Primary School in Sha Tin.

She has told teachers to search students' bags and confiscate any 'tamagotchi's they find, the *South China Morning Post* reported.

The tamagotchi features a tiny electronic screen with a "pet," such as a dog or cat, who must be fed, cleaned and played with.

It needs round-the-clock attention or else it "dies."

"How can students concentrate?" Tang asked. "They have to feed, clean and play with the pets, even during lessons." *(AFP)*

THOUGHT

Creativity is allowing yourself to make mistakes. Art is knowing which ones to keep.

(Scott Adams)

PRAYER

Noon..........13:02
Evening..........20:37
Dawn (tomorrow)..........04:08
Sunrise (tomorrow)..........05:48

Yemeni Children Die From Insulin Shots

SANAA — Twenty-one Yemeni children have died after being injected with insulin instead of inoculation against fatal diseases, a health ministry source said this week.

"Twenty-one out of 71 children died after receiving insulin shots instead of the necessary inoculation under an immunization program in one of the areas in the capital Sanaa," he told Reuters.

"The Health Ministry managed to save a large number of the children and their situation has improved in a satisfactory manner," he said.

He said the incident occurred last Thursday and Friday while the children were being treated under a government-run free immunization program to help reduce infant mortality.

The source did not give their ages but said authorities were investigating "those individuals who caused the accident".

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) said last year that infant mortality in impoverished Yemen was expected to drop to 110 in every 1,000 births in 1997 from 400 in 1960.

UNICEF is working with Yemen to cut mortality among children under five years old to 60 in every 1,000 births.

(Reuter)

TODAY IN HISTORY

1971 - Soviet Union signs 15-year pact with Egypt, pledging assistance in recovery of all Arab territories occupied by Israel.

1984 - Hundreds of parliamentarians from Austria, Britain, France, Norway, United States and West Germany at Paris conference join growing criticism of Soviet Union for human rights violations.

1985 - Typhoon in Bangladesh takes at least 3,000 lives, according to the Red Cross, news reports put the death toll at 20,000.

1988 - Syrian troops move into Beirut's southern slums, halting three weeks of savage street battles between rival shiite Muslim factions.

1989 - U.S. President George Bush meets with Italian leaders in Rome as White House says U.S. will not withdraw American troops from Europe without consulting first with Western allies.

1990 - President Mikhail Gorbachev goes on Soviet television, appealing to citizens to stay calm amid panic buying over plans to double food prices.

1991 - Kuwait's oppositions leaders meet with emir to demand that constitution be restored and martial law ended in that country.

United Media's Bulletin Board Service.
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T1	N1	E1	I1	T1	K5	S1		RACK 3
blank	Y4	S1	E1	L1	P3	I1	1st Letter Double	RACK 4

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by JUDD

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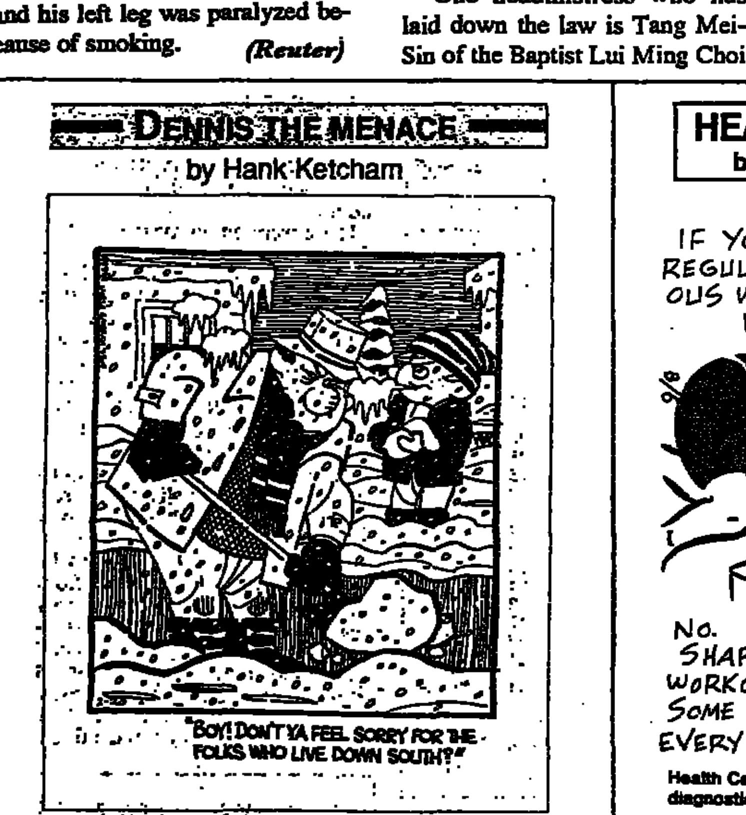
G2	N1	A1	R1	L1	Y4		RACK 1	10
C3	R1	A1	V4	A1	T1		RACK 2	33
A1	P3	R1	O1	N1	S1		RACK 3	8
W4	O1	B3	B3	L1	Y4		RACK 4	16

PAR SCORE 40-50 JUDD'S TOTAL 67

5-11-95

DENNIS THE MENACE

by Hank Ketcham



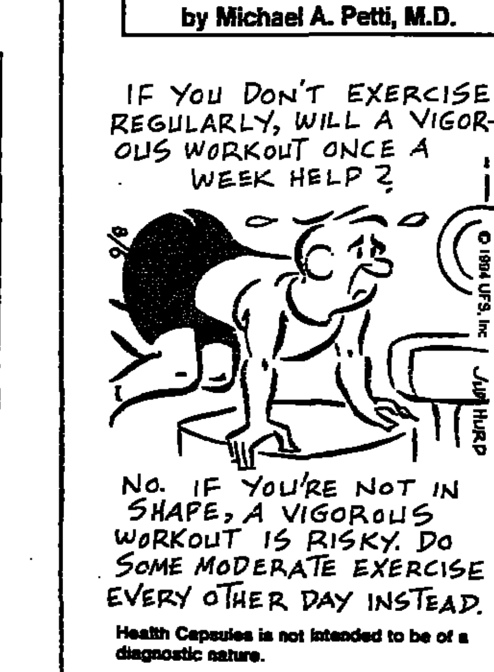




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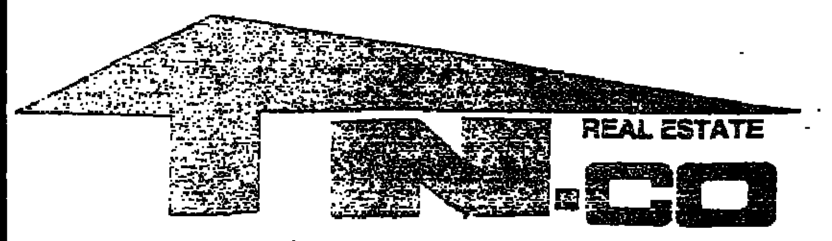


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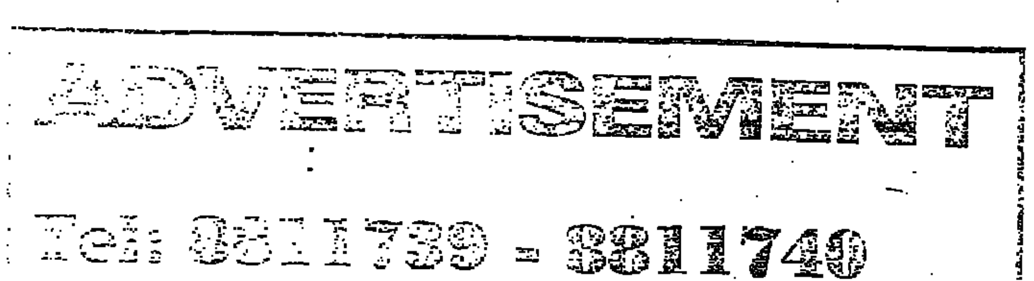
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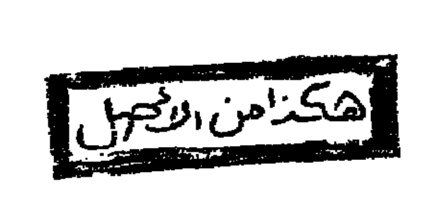
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Multiracial Americans Demanding Official Status

WASHINGTON — His starched white shirt contrasting with his cocoa-colored skin, 12-year-old Ryan Graham sat before a congressional committee to testify about skin color.

"My mom is white, my dad is black," said the soft-spoken boy, peering at the politicians through large, round glasses.

When Graham fills out government forms, he is usually asked to choose between his mother's or father's race.

"I feel very sad, because I can't choose — I am both!"

Efforts by multiracial Americans to gain recognition in official population statistics is coming to a head with a decision by the Federal government expected this year on whether to include a new multiracial category on census forms.

Their years of lobbying have also picked up momentum and publicity with the rise of golf star tiger woods, who calls himself "Cablinasian" — a combination of Caucasian, Black, Indian and Asian.

But there is also strong opposition to creating a new multiracial category — principally from mainstream minority groups such as the Black National Association for the Advancement of Colored People who fear the result would be a lowering of the U.S. black population.

That group's concerns were not allayed by a recent U.S. Census Department study that the new category would have little effect on the total number of people describing themselves as black.

Blacks fear their overall political strength would obviously go down if suddenly their population did. In addition, Federal money aimed at social welfare programs for blacks could be cut.

And some blacks simply don't want to recognize stars such as woods as anything but black. A recent article in a black magazine described woods as black despite his much publicized self-identification as multiracial.

Multiracial advocates also say that part of the opposition comes from taboos that continue to exist against marriages between blacks and whites especially.

Eleanor Holmes Norton, the black non-voting member of Congress who represents Washington, called the concerns of those describing themselves as multiracial "very sensitive".

But, she said, "We must not mix those personal concerns with the official business of government," fearing dilution of U.S. minorities' gains.

"Civil rights laws are difficult enough now to enforce," she said.

Multiracial advocates, however, attack such thinking as, ironically, harkening back to slave-era "one drop" rules which submitted that a person was black even if he had only "one drop" of black blood.

"Supporting 'one-drop' today is like supporting the flat earth theory," said Nathan Douglas with the group interracial family circle, calling such advocates "major contributors to lingering racism in America."

The complex issue also touches on other U.S. minorities, including Hawaiians and American Indians.

"If a person is three-fourths Caucasian and one-fourth Indian, that person would ordinarily not be considered an Indian for ethnological purposes," said Joann Chase of the National Congress of American Indians.

"Yet legally, such a person may be an Indian" for the purposes of indian law and in dealings between the us government and Indian tribes who gave up their lands to Washington.

Native Hawaiians, meanwhile, want to be reclassified in the same category as American Indians and Alaskan natives rather in the more general "Asian or Pacific islander" category.

(AFP)

UNESCO Opens Permanent Office in Gaza

GAZA CITY — UNESCO Director General Federico Mayor, on his first official visit to the Palestinian territories, announced the opening of a permanent office for the UN cultural agency in Gaza.

After meeting with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, mayor also announced the implementation of 17 new projects, but did not give any details.

Mayor's visit is aimed at determining aid from the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to create institutions and develop "a culture of peace," a UNESCO statement said.

On Sunday, mayor was due to visit the West Bank town of Ramallah where he will officially launch a project by UNESCO's International Institute for Educational Planning.

Financed by Italy, this two-million dollar project will aid 100 Palestinian educational establishments.

In Bethlehem, mayor is due to wind up preparatory work for an emergency plan aimed at safeguarding the historic town.

Earlier Saturday, Arafat's wife Suha arrived in the northern Italian town of Verona to inaugurate UNESCO's International Center dedicated to opera and poetry. *(AFP)*

EU Plays Up Social Conscience on Road to Amsterdam

AMSTERDAM — European Union leaders appear upbeat about the chances of forging wide-reaching treaty reforms that would ready the 15-nation bloc for enlargement and signal a new "people's Europe".

The Inter-Governmental Conference (IGC) review of the nuts and bolts of the Maastricht Treaty, which has ground on for over 15 months in relative obscurity, has suddenly burst into life now that the finishing tape is in sight.

"There will be a treaty in Amsterdam," predicted a confident German Chancellor Helmut Kohl after an informal meeting of EU leaders on Friday in the Dutch seaside resort of Noordwijk.

The EU leaders are due to sign the treaty reforms at a summit in the Dutch capital in three weeks' time.

The Noordwijk meeting also marked a sparkling European debut for Tony Blair, the new British Prime Minister whose Labour Party is sweeping away 18 years of Conservative wariness over Europe.

Blair breezed into Noordwijk with a large grin but a stern warning to his EU partners that they risked losing touch with voters unless they focused on the issues that matter to the bloc's 370 million citizens, 18 million of whom are unemployed.

"If Europe is to have support amongst the people of Europe, then it has to be a Europe that is clearly focused on the things that matter to them," Blair said, making job creation, competitiveness, the environment and consumer rights the priorities for a new treaty.

His matter-of-fact call for a more social Europe finds a ready audience among partners weary of British obstruction and echoes the grander, more idealistic comments of European Commission President Jacques Santer.

"Tomorrow's Europe is not just going to be a single market, a single currency, it's going to be a social Europe," Santer told a news conference in Noordwijk on Friday.

"We are living through an important point in history at Amsterdam. The greatest challenge for Europe in the 21st century is to succeed with enlargement, to reconcile Europe with itself, a continent of peace and stability."

Orchestrating the Amsterdam talks is Dutch Prime Minister Wim Kok, a pragmatic leader who, among many others, welcomed Britain's constructive approach at the EU negotiating table.

"Europe is looking at a future of employment, of social cohesion...how to combat exclusion from society, how to better fight organized crime and forge a common foreign and security policy," he said.

"Everybody wants Amsterdam to be a success. The treaty of Amsterdam will smoothe the way for Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) and will be the...political marker for candidate countries (wanting to join the bloc)."

Kok and his Foreign Minister Hans Van Mierlo will embark on a final tour of EU capitals before the June 16-17 summit to prepare the final treaty.

Diplomats say there is a clear drive among leaders to put aside the crucial, but more mundane issues of internal reforms leaving Amsterdam to focus on the social ideal.

But the run-up to the June summit will not be all plain sailing.

A simmering row between the larger and smaller members over the make-up of a new-look commission and a re-weighting of votes to give everyone a fair say in decision-making, could still erupt at Amsterdam and jeopardize a substantial treaty deal.

(Reuter)

Islamic Consultative Assembly

Victory of the Islamic Revolution and Transformation of the Old System

The Islamic Revolution in Iran emerged victorious on Feb. 11, 1979 following the unceasing struggles of the people by reliance upon Islam, the people's concerted unity, and the leadership of Ayatollah al-Uzma Imam Khomeini, who succeeded in giving expression to the unity of the nation in the light of the Islamic school of thought and through his prophetic leadership. The revolution put an end to the monarchical regime of the Shah, and crushed internal despotism backed by external hegemonistic powers.

With the victory of the Islamic Revolution the slogan: "Independence, Freedom, Islamic Republic" chanted by the people during nationwide bloody demonstrations was translated into reality. And the leader of the revolution issued a decree for holding a referendum for transformation of the Pahlavi monarchical order into an "Islamic Republic government."

Following the decree, the Iranian people from all walks of life surged to cast their votes in response to the Imam's call for an "Islamic Republic". The nation endorsed the new system on April 1, 1979 by an overwhelming majority vote of 98. 2 percent of the entire eligible voting population.

Formulation of the Constitution

After nationwide assent to establishment of the "Islamic Republic System", it was first necessary to lay down the republic's Constitution to provide the practical ground for an Islamic government.

On August 3, 1980, a general election was held to select experts to draft the Constitution. Finally, an Assembly of Experts comprising 72 members convened on August 19, 1979 for final confirmation of the Constitution.

The Assembly of Experts comprising a large group of Islamologists and prominent Muslim jurisprudents (Fughaha) succeeded in finalizing the Constitution within a period of 3 months through their round-the-clock efforts, infused by an Islamic spirit governing the Majlis and with resolute support of the Imam and the people.

After final endorsement by the Assembly of Experts, the Constitution was ratified by the Imam and the nation on December 3, 1979 with 99.5 percent of the votes cast in its favor. In this manner the Constitution acquired legitimacy, thereby enshrining the policy of the Islamic Republic system inspired by the Holy book (Qoran) and Traditions of the Holy Prophet Mohammad (S).

Elections

The first round of Majlis elections was held in March 4, 1980 and the second on May 1980.

A candidate who at national elections to the Majlis does not obtain an absolute majority in the first round will participate in a second round. That is to say, the candidates who have not obtained an absolute majority in the first round, will be permitted to participate in a second round provided they come within the number of candidates allowed in this round. The number of candidates is determined to be twice the number of deputies allocated to a particular constituency. If the number of candidates entitled to run in the second round happens to be less than twice then all the candidates are eligible.

Article 64 of the Constitution stipulates that:

There are to be two hundred seventy members of the Islamic Consultative Assembly which, keeping in view the human, political, geographic and other similar factors, may increase by not more than twenty for each ten-year period from the date of the national referendum of the year 1358 of the solar Islamic calendar.

The Zoroastrians and Jews will each elect one representative: Assyrian and Chaldeen Christians will jointly elect one representative; and Armenian Christians in the north and those in the south of the country will each elect one representative.

Velayat-e-Faqih (Sovereignty of the Supreme Muslim Jurisprudent)

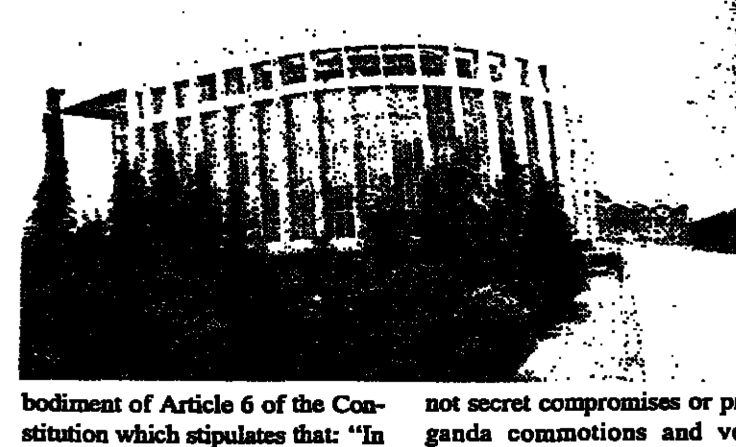
Among the pillars of government defined in the Constitution, the institution of Velayat-e-Faqih which overrides all other powers and embodies the Islamic nature of the government, is symbolized as the "Rope of God," (a symbolic Qoranic expression) which binds together the people and the three powers emanating from the people's rule, thus remaining safe from division, discord, deviation, and electism.

A clear indication of the pivotal role of the Velayat-e-Faqih which the people of Iran agree has been beneficial in every way during the post-revolutionary era is the manner in which Imam Khomeini was able to integrate and unify the different strata of people in society and the officials when the nation was confronted by internal and external counter-revolutionary forces aiming to disrupt national unity. An experience of this kind, of which there were many, is demonstrable and irrefutable proof of the tremendously vital role of the institution of Velayat-e-Faqih in unifying the people in single rank.

Islamic Consultative Assembly (Majlis)

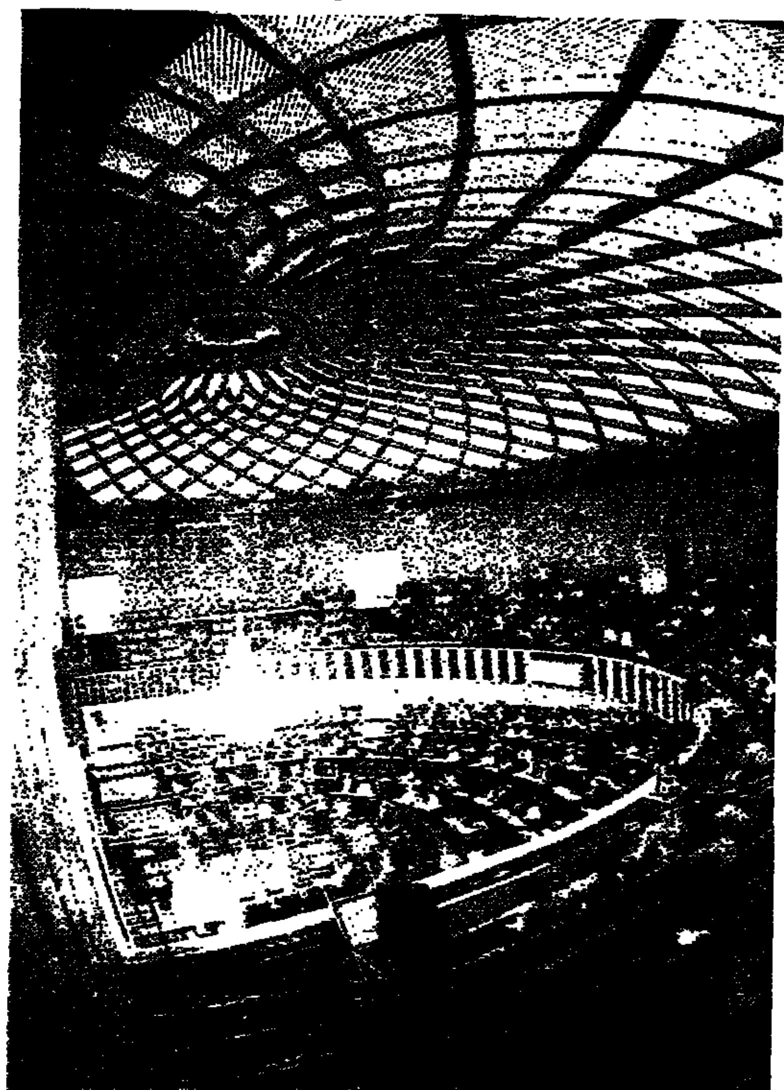
The Majlis (legislative power) is composed of the representatives of people from across the country elected through direct and secret ballots. From a Constitutional point of view, the Majlis is an embodiment of the people's power and rule and a true example of a republic. The other two powers, in fact, are intended to give effect to and buttress the legislative enactments of the Majlis.

The philosophy behind the existence of the Majlis is to give expression to the Qoranic verse "... and their rule is to take counsel among themselves", which calls on believers to settle their affairs by consultation with each other. The Majlis is indeed an em-



bodiment of Article 6 of the Constitution which stipulates that: "In the Islamic Republic of Iran, the affairs of the country must be administered on the basis of public opinion expressed by the means of elections, including the election of the Majlis Deputies. Article 7 also describes the Majlis as the decision-making and administrative organ of the country

It should be noted that administration of affairs through consultation - an idea which is today expressed in the form of the parliamentary system - is a completely Islamic prescription, which found expression in the time of the Holy Prophet (S) of Islam. Historical events such as the Holy Prophet's (S) counsels in mosques also bear testimony to the exercise of this order in the early years of Islam. Of course, there is big gulf between an Islamic Consultative Assembly (in terms of its contents, standards for selection of repre-



sentatives and their relations with each other and with executive systems and people, the method of its work, its goals and performances) and Western parliaments apart from a superficial resemblance, which in fact is as the same gulf between Islam and Western civilization. In electoral propaganda campaigns also Islamic standards count, not rabble-rousing speeches and resort to fraudulence and demagogy. What constitute the criteria for methods of action is protection of the pbulic interest, not secret compromises or propaganda commotions and verbal quarrels. Perhaps the concept that the idea of consultation is a practice with its basis in religion is sacred and one that is necessary makes the appellation 'Islamic Consultative Assembly' an apt and comprehensive one and gives the Majlis a special stature as a source of essential thought and growth within the nation.

In this way the Majlis is secure against dictatorial conduct and serves as a bulwark against the justification of the oppression of tyrants. It will rather act as an active and innovative body serving the people and the ruling school of thought; that is, Islam.

The Philosophy Behind the Majlis Authority

The legislative power is a reflection of the people's will. Based on Article 76 of the Constitution the Majlis has the right to investigate and examine all the affairs of the country. Vested with such an authority, each Deputy is responsible before the people as defined in Article 84. And since freedom is a prerequisite to such a responsibility, each Deputy is free to express his views and enjoys immunity from prosecution or arrest.

Article 71 of the Constitution provides for the Majlis to enact laws on all matters, within the limits of its competence as laid down by the Constitution. This principle, in fact, protects the system of society and should serve to obliterate all signs of taghout (symbols of despotism). It should pave the ground for development in a society based on precise Islamic principles and replace regulations hampering the progress of society with Islamic laws and orders.

Article 77 and 82 of the Constitution states that international treaties, protocols, contracts, and agreements must be approved by the Majlis (77). The employment of foreign experts is forbidden, except in cases of necessity and with the approval of the Majlis (82). In this manner, the Majlis bars infiltration of insidious imperialist forces, helps develop the nation's innovative talents, and clears the way for self-sufficiency and independence, as the watchwrods of the revolution.

Based on the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Majlis is the main institution conducive to independence, growth and freedom of the Islamic Ummah. The Majlis is entitled to obstruct infiltration of imperialism by approving all political, economic and cultural relations with foreign countries. The Majlis also has the right to pronounce a vote of confidence of the Council of Ministers (87) and interpellate the Council of Ministers or an individual minister (89), thus hindering imperious conduct of executive power and internal despotism.

By passing revolutionary laws in conformity with Islamic standards to meet all the requirements of society and by strict supervision of their execution (aiming at the formation of a society based on Islamic justice), the Majlis can offer new values to today's world polluted by polytheism and tyranny and materialize the hope of the world oppressed people for emancipation from the domination of global Western and Eastern Zionism and imperialism.

According to the Constitution the responsibilities of Majlis Deputies can be outlined as follows:

- ✓ Vote of confidence in ministers.
- ✓ Supervision of government performance.
- ✓ Interpellation or dismissal of ministers or president.

Approval of annual budget and supervision of its spending.

- ✓ Endorsement and approval of treaties, protocols, contracts and international agreements.
- ✓ Permission for employment of foreign experts.
- ✓ Permission to take or give loans or foreign and domestic aid grants.
- ✓ Enactment of executive laws.
- ✓ Right to express views and investigate into all domestic and foreign-related affairs of the country.
- ✓ To act as the highest authority to examine people's complaints.
- ✓ To determine the procedure of prosecutions and structure of the country's judicial system.
- ✓ Ratification of judicial laws.
- ✓ To specify the qualifications and conditions requisite of those selected to occupy the position of a judge.

Council of Guardians

Beside the majlis, a council referred to as the "Council of Guardian" has been instituted. According to Article 93 of the Constitution, the Majlis does not hold any legal status if there is no Guardians.

Council in existence. Based on Article 91, the duty of the Council is to safeguard the Islamic ordinances and the Constitution. The Council is composed of the following:

1. Six just 'fughaha' cognizant of the exigencies of the time, to be appointed by the leader.

2. Six jurists well-versed in different areas of law, to be elected by the majlis from among the Muslim jurists nominated by the Head of the judicial power.

The presence of 6 'faqihs' in the Council of Guardians, in fact, indicates one instance of the supervision and leadership of Vali-ye Amr (possessor of command) over the legislative power as provided in Article 57 of the Constitution.

In order to embody the laws and plans of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the pillars of Islamic ideology and beliefs, the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran has foreseen the creation of Council of Guardians. The Council aims to avert the kind of corruption prevalent in the time of the former regime and the threat of despotism and employment of coercion and intimidation, and to protect the Constitutional laws against distortion and misuse of laws which according to Article 2 and 4 are respected by the people and supported by the prominent religious authorities and the great leader and founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

This body in the Islamic Republic of Iran is one of the progressive, constructive and noble organs which can protect the interests of Islam, the Muslim nation, the Islamic Revolution, and full independence of the country.

It is obvious that even a minor mistake may be trumpeted by the propaganda apparatus of alien forces and devious groups. These propagandists may accordingly urge that a certain law which may run counter to Islam or the Constitution should be passed by he majlis. Although such an atmosphere cannot influence the present Majlis, it will not be impossible that such events might take place in future due to certain considerations. Decisions might possibly be taken that would be disastrous and may in time lead to domination of alien powers thus nullifying the country's independence. As such the existence of an institution possessing very high stature and enjoying full legal power called the Council of Guardians is indispensable. Such a body will review the laws on the basis of religious standards and the Constitution and averts the threats against the Islamic Republic system. The institution should win the confidence of the people to the effect that the laws enacted by the Majlis are in conformity with Islamic tenets, giving legitimacy to all organs, foundations organizations and executive operations in the country.



هكذا من الأصل

Islamic Consultative Assembly

Programs of the Islamic Consultative Assembly

Majlis Deputies have two major duties to carry out: (a) to attend the open sessions of the Majlis to express views and make a final survey of the bills and motions and ultimately pass or reject them; (b) to participate in the Majlis internal committees.

Open Sessions of Majlis

The Standing Order of the Majlis requires that all Deputies shall be present at the Majlis open session 15 minutes prior to their commencement on dates which shall have been determined earlier and notified to them. Any Deputy failing to appear on time, or is late, without any plausible excuse, shall be taken to task by a reprimand of the Majlis Presidency. Any Deputy failing to be present at the time of voting on a motion may also be subject to a reprimand irrespective of whether the voting is open (by a show of hands), or by secret ballot. Open Sessions of the Majlis are so named according to Article 69 of the Constitution because the sittings are free to be broadcast over the national radio and televisions. People as well as foreign and domestic reporters can attend the majlis open sessions.

According to the Rules of Procedure, Article 177, reporters from the press, radio, and T.V. as well as visitors holding entry access cards specially issued for the day's sitting are permitted to the parliament building to attend the place earmarked for them. Public Relations Department of the Majlis will make every necessary coordinations in this regard, and accommodate about 300 such persons on the days when there is an open session.

The annual estimate of the visitors of the open sessions are about 30,000 persons. Public Relations Department has also provided certain facilities for the deputies to ease their personal contacts with people, here in the capital, in addition to their presence in the constituencies where they were elected.

Majlis Deputies have been provided with certain bureaus to facilitate visit of their electors. People can visit their deputies according to the time-schedule already announced through media. Over 200,000 individuals annually visit their deputies through these bureaus.

According to Article 69 of the Constitution, Majlis sittings should be held openly and a full report of each sitting is released for public through the radio and the official gazette. Thus, the radio has a live broadcast of the Majlis deliberations. In addition to daily papers, the gazette also publishes the proceedings in details for public.

The Majlis open session works in the following order.

1. Announcement by the Majlis Speaker that the Majlis is in session.

Presentation of the agenda by the Secretary of the Majlis.

Recitation of verses from the Holy Qoran (if possible verses which are relevant to the agenda).

2. Pre-agenda speeches.

3. Taking up of the items on the agenda.

a) Deliberations on motions and bills.

b) Questions to be put to ministers individually or to the cabinet.

4. Conclusion of the sitting.

Announcement by the Majlis Speaker that the Assembly is in Session

Any single sitting during an Open Session of the Majlis commences only when there is a quorum of 180 Deputies, after which the Majlis Speaker by ringing the bell declares the session open. The Majlis Secretary thereupon reads out the agenda. A moment's silence follows and then only the sonorous cadences of the Holy Qoran being recited can be head throughout the Assembly.

Pre-agenda Speeches

Article 84 of the Constitution provides that every representative is responsible to the entire nation and has the right to express his/her views on all internal and external affairs of the country. A Standing Order of the Majlis stipulates that every Deputy who wishes to express himself/herself on any subject that needs to be brought before the Majlis and the nation may do so. Each Deputy is assigned 10 minutes for his speech but he or she may share such speaking time allotted with other Deputies giving up a minimum of 3 minutes, or his/her entire time to another Deputy. In all, however, Deputies using up time allotted to them shall speak only for a maximum of 30 minutes during pre-agenda time.

Speeches delivered by Deputies before the agenda of Majlis namely pre-agenda speeches are intended to be individual and personal expressions of views and opinions which they are free to hold and air in the Assembly and for which they are not liable to prosecution. However, the immunity conferred on Majlis Deputies goes along with the recommendation that they should at all times be mindful of the rules pertaining to the order and conduct to be observed in the Assembly and their obligation to maintain the prestige of the Majlis at all times.

If it so happens that a Deputy does not conduct himself/herself according to the rules set forth by the Majlis and indulges in improper conduct then the Majlis Speaker may do one of the two things or both as follows:

1) Administer a verbal reprimand directed at the offending Deputy.

2) Give a warning to the Deputy concerned.

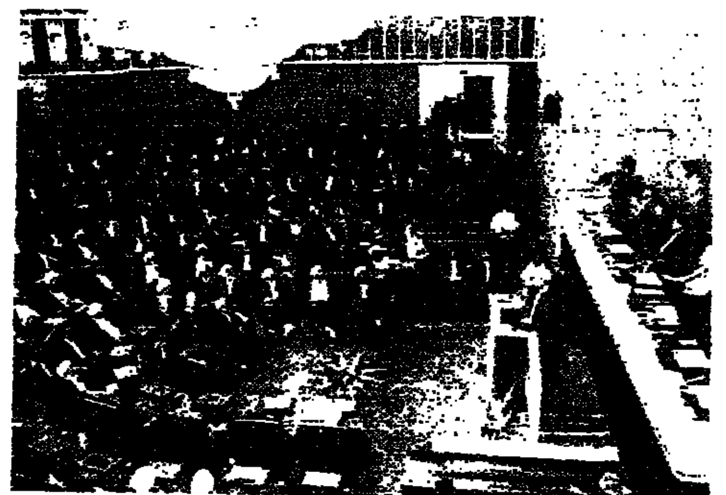
3) Summon him/her to the Presidium of the Majlis to provide an explanation of his/her conduct.

It is no permissible for Deputies to interrupt speeches being made by other Deputies, to create disturbances of any kind or cause disorder in the Majlis, to level personal accusations against Deputies or make protestations of an unbecoming nature. The Majlis Speaker in such an event will reprimand the offending Deputy according to the provisions of the Majlis Rules of Procedure.

In every session before taking up the agenda, the Speaker may give a brief address to the Deputies concerning the very important issues of the day.

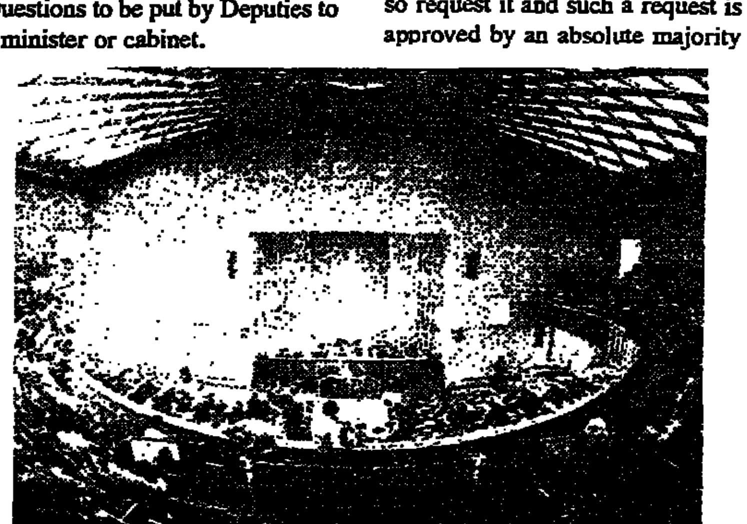
Majlis Agenda

The Agenda of the Majlis is usually prepared to survey the bills and motions, or study questions and where necessary interpellate the cabinet or minister. The Weekly Agenda of the Majlis should be prepared by Majlis Presidium with due regard to the bills and motions sent by various committees in sequential order and the Majlis Presidium will thereafter publish and distribute it among the Majlis Deputies and officially announce it on the Notice Board of the Majlis.



Motions and bills which are deemed to have priority by the government may be taken up by 15 Deputies who will submit such bills for urgent consideration by placing them on the Weekly Agenda, with the approval of the Presidium, irrespective of the sequential order in which they are recorded.

Motions and bills with two priorities are exempted from this rule and may be taken up and discussed at 24 hours notice in the Majlis. And if the Majlis approves three priorities of the bill or motions it will also change the agenda for that day. Now the agenda should be explained in two separate parts: a) Survey of motions and bills; b) Questions to be put by Deputies to a minister or cabinet.



Submission of Motions, Bills and Plans and Their Passage Into Law

The Majlis can enact laws on all matters, within the limits of its competence as laid down by Article 71 of the Constitution. According to Article 74 of the Constitution, government bills are presented to the Majlis after receiving the approval of the Council of Ministers. Members' bills may be introduced in the Majlis if sponsored by at least fifteen members.

According to Article 102 the Supreme Council of Provinces has the right within its jurisdiction, to draft bills and to submit them to the Majlis, either directly or through the government.

Based on Article 94 of the constitution all legislation passed by the Majlis must be sent to the Guardians Council. The Guardians Council must review it within a maximum of ten days from its receipt with a view to ensuring its compatibility with the criteria of Islam and the Constitution. If the Guardians Council deems such laws to be in accordance with Islamic principles and the Constitution, they are thereupon submitted as an official document to the President who will then be responsible for their execution. The President is required to place his signature against all such laws that have been submitted to him and order the officials to take up their execution within a period of not less than five days. The bills and motions can be ordinary or with one, two or three degree priorities.

Questioning of Officials

Article 70 of the Constitution reads as follows: The President and ministers have the right of participation in open sessions of the Majlis individually or collectively and their assistants can accompany them. In case the Deputies request it, ministers must be present in the Majlis and whenever they desire, their speeches would get a hearing. If 15 deputies so request it and such a request is approved by an absolute majority of the deputies present, the President may be called upon to and will be obliged to appear in the Majlis.

According to Article 88 of the Constitution, whenever at least one-fourth of the total number of members of the Majlis put a question to the President, or any single member of the Assembly puts a question to a minister on a subject relating to their duties, the President or the minister is obliged to present himself at the Assembly and answer the question. This answer must not be delayed more than one month in the case of the minister, except with an excuse deemed reasonable by the Majlis.

Closure of the Session

According to the Majlis Rules of Procedure every daily Open Session shall take at most 4 hours which may be either held constantly or intermittently. In emergency cases as deemed necessary by the Speaker and after approval of the Majlis and when the budget bill is submitted, Open Session should be held uninterruptedly on all days excluding Fridays and official holidays at least four hours per day. Timing of the Open Session should be arranged in a way that it should not conflict with prayer times.

On this basis and after the agenda is read (as much as possible) the names of absentees as well as a program of the committees and necessary notifications is announced and the closure of the session declared.

The Speaker, prior to conclusion of every session, announces the day and hour when the next session and agenda is in force.

Sessions in Camera

In this regard, Article 69 of the Constitution reads: A closed session may be held in emergency conditions, if it is required for national security, upon a request by the President, one of the ministers, or ten members of the Assembly. Legislation passed at a closed session is valid only when approved by three-fourths of the members in the presence of the Guardians Council. After emergency conditions have ceased to exist, the minutes of such closed sessions, together with any legislation approved in them, must be made available to the public.

Majlis Committees

According to Article 85 of the Constitution, the Majlis may authorize its ad hoc committees to pass certain bills in necessary cases, on a provisional basis and shall be subsequently approved by the Guardians Council. Like all other laws, these should be in conformity with the religion of Islam and accord with the principles set forth in the Constitution.

Such laws may be put into effect provisionally for a period specified by the Majlis, and their final approval rests with the Majlis.

The provision made to pass law by submission to specially created committees from within the Majlis has been considered necessary where the normal process of introducing the bill or motion in the Open Sessions of the Majlis may not be possible quickly because of the time required to make detailed inquiries and work out the details relating to such laws to be presented as fully fledged bills in the Majlis. It is believed that the smaller groups of members in so far as their experience is concerned will be able to do the work more expeditiously and thoroughly and have the laws formulated in far quicker time than they would because of the procedural delays in the Open Sessions of the Majlis.

Standing Committees

Standing Committees are formed with due regard to the organizational structures of the country. It may happen sometimes that some identical committees are consolidated with the approval of the Majlis in order to accelerate execution of the duties assigned to them. Standing Committees listed below may be increased, when necessary, with the approval of the Majlis.

Each deputy should accept membership of at least one of the following Standing Committees. Article 42 of the Rules of Procedure of the Majlis states that the total number of Standing Committees are as follow:

1. Education Committee
2. Committee on Islamic Culture and Guidance and Mass Communication
3. Committee on Economics and Financial Affairs
4. Plan & Budget Committee
5. Oil Committee
6. Industries and Mines Committee
7. Administrative and Employment Committee
8. Housing and Transport Committee
9. Judicial Committee
10. Defense Committee
11. Foreign Relations Committee
12. Committee on Internal Affairs and Councils
13. Health Committee
14. Energy and Telecommunications Committee
15. Commerce Committee
16. Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development
17. Committee on Culture and Higher Education
18. Committee on Article 90 of the Constitution
19. Accounts Tribunal Committee
20. Committee on the Affairs of Revolutionary Organs
21. Question Committee
22. Inquiry Committee
23. Committee on Preparation of Majlis Rules of Procedure
24. Special Committee on Investigation of Pre-Revolution and Post-Revolution Laws.
25. Committee on Labor and Social Affairs.

Provisional Committees

As regards bills and motions whose basic relations with the committees are not specified clearly and display various ambiguous or doubtful aspects, the Majlis Presidium can set up a Special Supervisory Committee whose members are selected from related committees, referring the bills and matters to that committee, which will report its outcome to the Majlis after deliberation.

If there arises a need to deal with exceptional and important questions necessitating a Special Committee to deliberate them, a committee shall be formed with the suggestion of at least 15 deputies and endorsement of the Majlis. Members of the Special Committee range from 5 to 11 and are elected directly in the Open Session by the deputies through secret balloting and a relative majority.

Majlis Presidency

To conduct the Majlis-related affairs the Majlis deputies elect a speaker, two vice-speakers, six secretaries and three administrative managers from among candidate deputies for a period of one year.

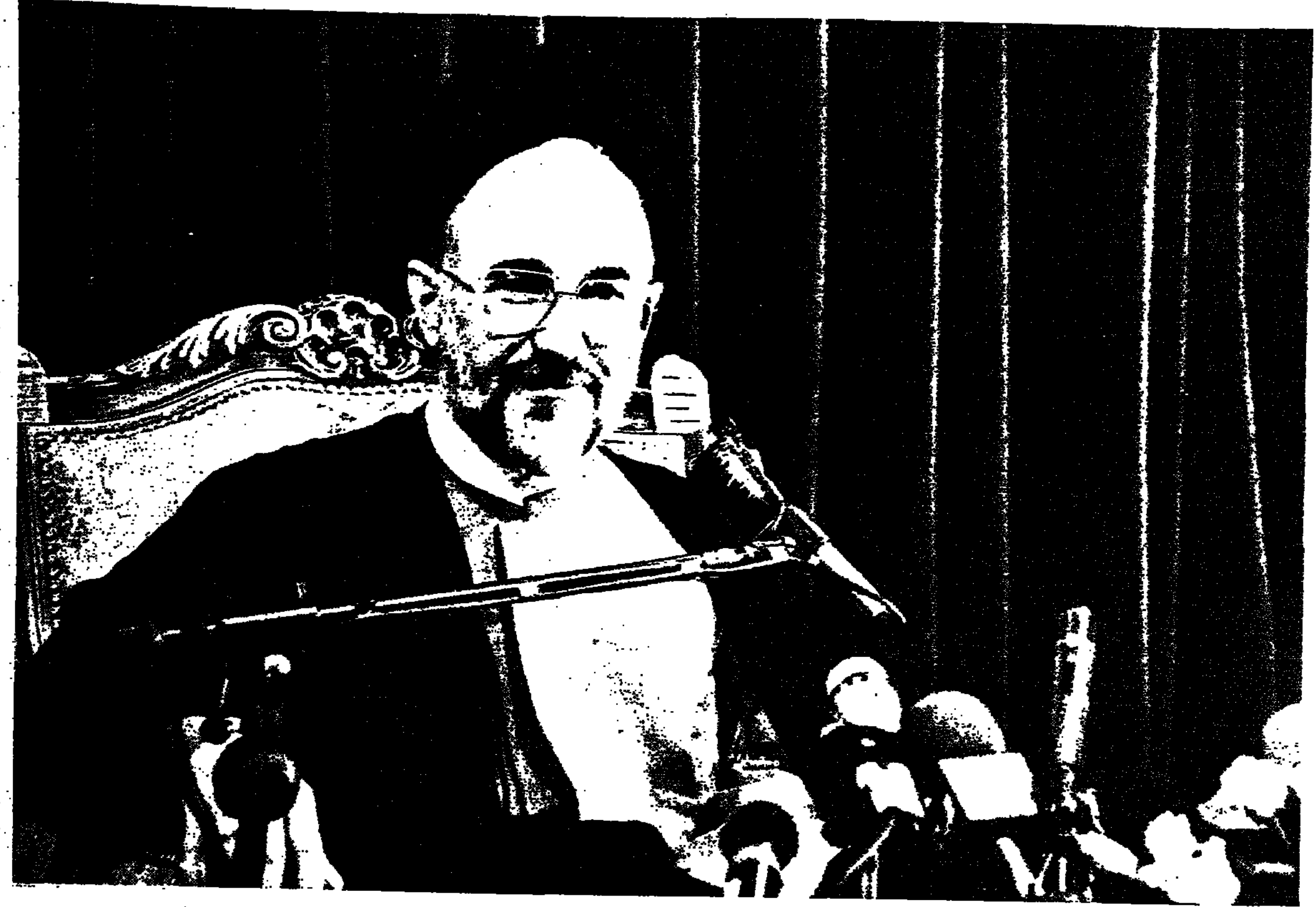
Secretaries

Duties of the secretaries may be, inter alia, outlined as follows:

✓ Selecting some verses of the Holy Qoran to be read at the beginning of the session.

(Contd on Pg. 14)





THE VICTORY OF HOJJATOLESLAM SEYED MOHAMMAD KHATAMI, IN THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IS WARMLY CONGRATULATED TO THE NOBLE NATION OF IRAN AND THE SUPREME LEADER AS WELL AS PRESIDENT-ELECT HOJJATOLESLAM KHATAMI

Board of Directors and Personnel of Yazd Kasra Carpet Co.

هیئت مدیره و کارکنان شرکت فرش کسری یزد

HEARTIEST CONGRATULATIONS ON THE ADMIRABLE VICTORY OF HOJJATOLESLAM SEYED MOHAMMAD KHATAMI TO THE SUPREME LEADER AYATOLLAH KHAMENEI, THE NOBLE NATION OF IRAN, AND THE PRESIDENT-ELECT. WE WISH OUR PRESIDENT-ELECT FURTHER SUCCESS IN ALL HIS ENDEAVORS TOWARD MEETING HIGH OBJECTIVES OF THE ISLAMIC REVOLUTION.



MANAGEMENT AND PERSONNEL OF SIM LACKY YAZD CO., PRODUCER OF MAGNETIC WIRES

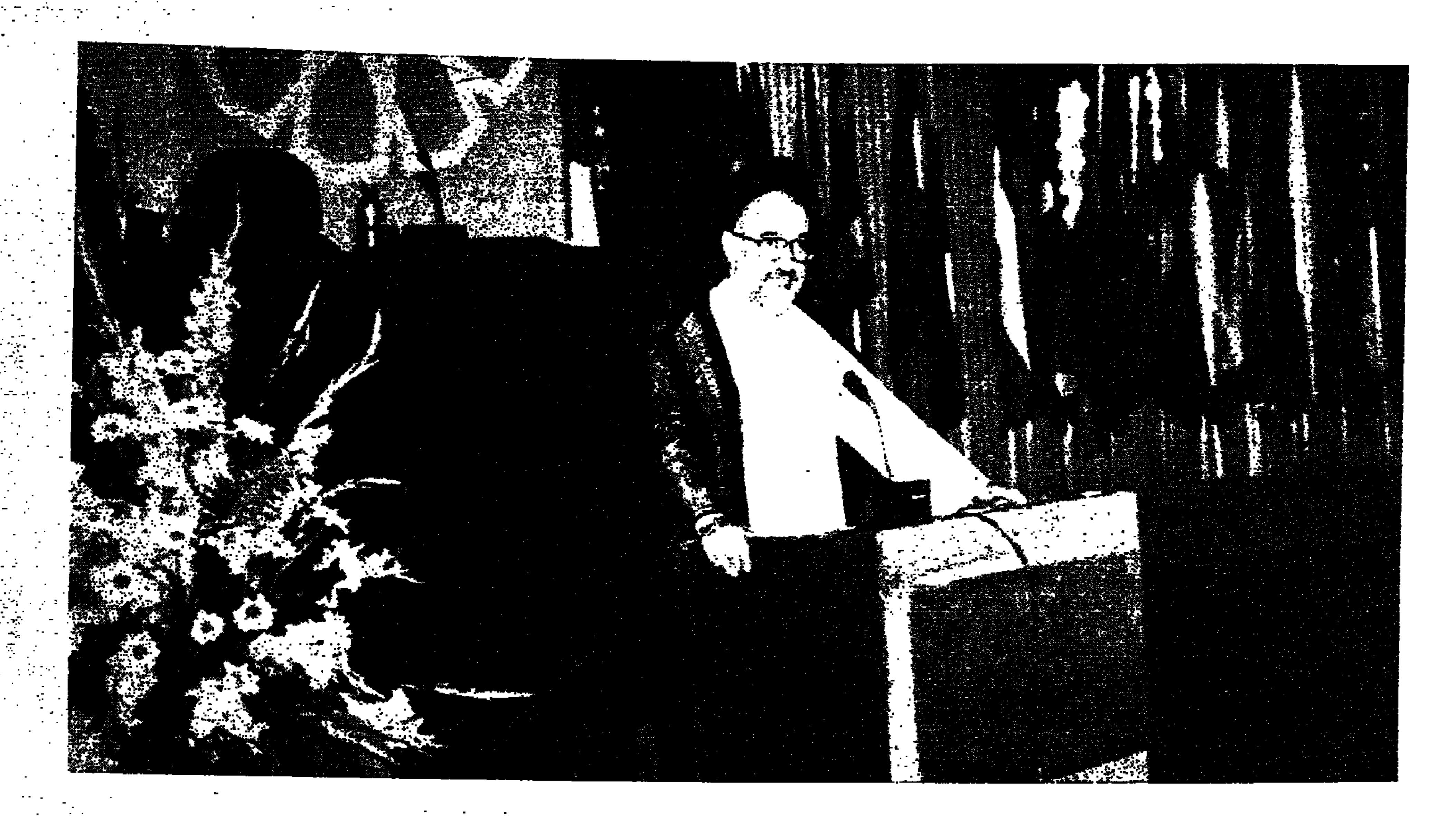
مدیریت و کارکنان شرکت سیم لاکی یزد

Congratulations on the victory of Hojjatoleslam Khatami in the presidential election of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Supreme Leader and noble nation of Iran. We wish further success for the president-designate Hojjatoleslam Seyed Mohammad Khatami.

Yazd Aramesh Industries Company



هكذا من الأصل



THE ESTEEMED PRESIDENT-ELECT OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN,

HOJJATOLESLAM SEYED MOHAMMAD KHATAMI

Congratulations on your landslide victory in receiving millions of votes of the dedicated Muslim people of Iran in the seventh presidential election which as the Supreme Leader said was a historic epic.

We wish you, the sincere companion of the Supreme Leader, great success in serving the people and achieving the objectives of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Personnel of Yazd Mines & Metals Department General

&

Miners & Mining Companies of Yazd Province

کـــارکـنـان اداره کل مـــعـــادن و فلـزات

وشرکتهای معـدنی ومعدن کاران استان یزد

The Esteemed President-Elect of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Hojjatoleslam Seyed Mohammad Khatami



Congratulations on your landslide election victory, which according to the Supreme Leader, was a historic epic. We wish you great success in serving the dedicated Muslim nation of Iran and achieving the objectives of the Islamic Revolution.

Management and Personnel of Yazd Bastan Carpet Company

فـــرش بـاســتـــان یزد

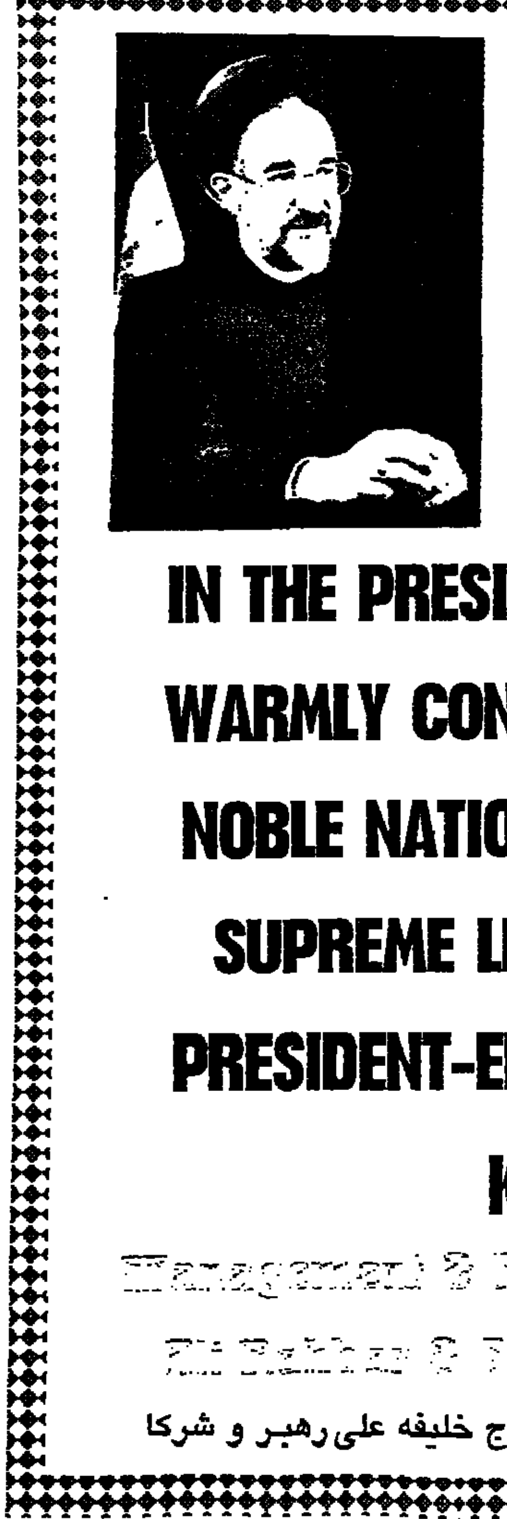
Heart-felt felicitations on the landslide victory of Hojjatoleslam Seyed Mohammad Khatami in the seventh presidential election to the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei and noble nation of Iran and the president-elect Khatami.



We wish you further success in meeting the objectives of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Ardakan Wood & Metal Industries (CHOOFA)

صنایع چوب و فلز اردکان (چوفا)



THE LANDSLIDE VICTORY OF

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IN THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IS WARMLY CONGRATULATED TO THE NOBLE NATION OF IRAN AND THE SUPREME LEADER AS WELL AS PRESIDENT-ELECT HOJJATOLESLAM KHATAMI

Management & Personnel of Haj Khalifeh Ali Rahbar & Partners Pastry-Making

ازطرف مدیریت وکارکنان شیرینی سازی حاج خلیفه علی رهبر و شرکا





Once again the alert Islamic nation of Iran, obeyed the Supreme Leader's recommendation and, in a massive turnout, attended polling stations and elected one of the best entities of Islamic Revolution, the scholar and committed devotee of the late Imam Khomeini and supporter of the Supreme Leader, as their president.

This deserved selection is warmly congratulated to the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei and the distinguished President Hashemi Rafsanjani as well as dear president-elect Hojjatoleslam Seyed Mohammad Khatami.

It is hoped that, under the leadership of Ayatollah Khamenei and enjoying revolutionary potentialities of the Islamic nation, high Islamic values would be restored and construction efforts would be maintained with further strength.

Management and Personnel of Zarrin Yazd Company

شرکت زرین یزد

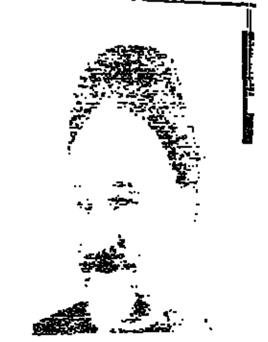


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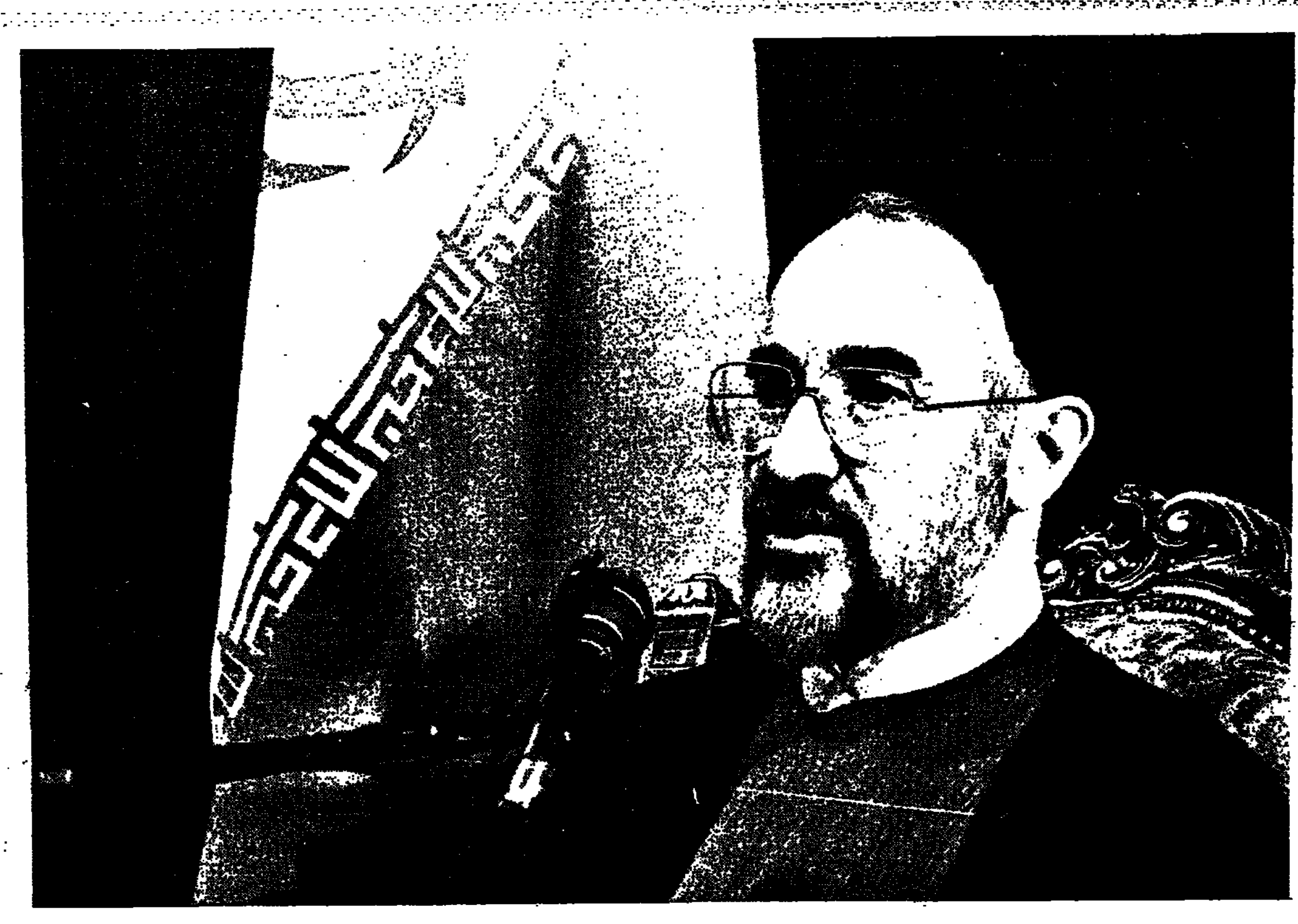
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بيمارستان

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...NEW POST.



THE ESTEEMED PRESIDENT-ELECT OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN,

[illegible] SEYED MOHAMMAD KHATAMI

Our most sincere congratulations on your landslide victory in receiving more than 20,000,000 votes of the dedicated Muslim nation of Iran in the seventh round of presidential elections, which according to the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei, was a historic epic.

We wish you further success in serving the people and achieving high objectives of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Alvand Asayesh Construction Co.

Tel: 822 8000 — 822 8010-12

شرکت الوند آسایش

President Rafsanjani ... in Khorasan Today

...Velayati Predicts No Ch... in Iran's Foreign Polic...

